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# MAN IN INDIA

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## EVOLUTIONISM RE-CONSIDERED

By SURAJIT SINHA

CULTURAL Anthropology imbibed evolutionism as its central theme almost as a birth-right. The leading nineteenth century anthropologists were deeply absorbed in studying and speculating upon the probable stages through which 'aspects of culture' and 'culture as a whole' 'evolved' or 'progressed'. Tylor puts it as follows: 'Human institutions like stratified rocks succeed each other in series substantially uniform over the globe, independent of what seems to be the comparatively superficial difference of race and language, but shaped by similar human nature.....' (Tylor 1889, p. 245—269). The story of how the colossal interpretative analysis and speculations of the classical evolutionists came into disrepute through energetic criticism from the diffusionists of different schools, German, British and American, and also from the functionalists, is too well known to need repetition. The functionalists, however, did not care to spend too much time in a detailed criticism of the evolutionary approach, because they maintained that all answers to the relevant scientific problems of culture can be best derived from an intensive functional analysis of contemporary cultures on the synchronic level. However, we find the two leading functionalists, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, accepting the factor of evolution. Malinowski writes: 'Evolutionism is at present rather un-

'fashionable. Nevertheless, its main assumptions are not only valid, but also indispensable to the field-worker as well as to the student of theory.....The concept of "stages" remains as valid as that of origins. We would, however, have to make any evolutionary scheme of successive developmental strata either very general or else valid only for certain regions and certain conditions...' ( Malinowski 1943, p. 16). Radcliffe-Brown considers social evolution as a reality which social anthropologists should recognize and study: 'Like organic evolution, it can be defined by two features. There has been a process by which, from a small number of forms of social structure, many different forms have arisen in the course of history; that is, there has been a process of diversification. Secondly, throughout this process more complex forms of social structure have developed out of, or replaced simpler forms' ( Radcliffe-Brown 1940, p. 203).

Boas and his students spent relatively more time and energy in disproving the details of the evolutionary stages postulated by classical evolutionists. Since 1896, when Boas wrote on 'The Limitations of the Comparative Method', to the late thirties of the twentieth century, American anthropology was dominated by this enthusiasm for disproving evolutionism from as many angles and in as many specific cases as possible. Lowie finds the task fairly accomplished by the time he wrote his *History of Ethnological Theory* in 1937. Distaste and antipathy to evolutionism is clearly indicated in Laufer's comment: '(theory of evolution) is the most inane, sterile and pernicious theory ever conceived in the history of science'.

The criticisms against classical evolutionism may be compressed into the following few points:

1. They started with an *a priori* hypothetical scheme that culture grows invariably from simple to complex forms, and tried conveniently to squeeze empirical findings into it. Their method was basically deductive rather than inductive.
2. 'The comparative method' of Tylor neglected the space and time co-ordinates of the particular culture traits examined.

3. The comparative method treated culture traits in isolation from their cultural matrix. That is, they were not sufficiently aware of the functional interrelationship of parts of culture.

4. They ignored the factor of diffusion.

5. Their concept of 'progress' was very largely dominated by Euro-American values.

6. Later empirical studies did not lend support to universal precedence of 'matriarchate to patriarchate', 'sexual promiscuity', 'economic communism', and so on.

7. Equation of contemporary primitive cultures with prehistoric evolutionary stages is unsupportable.

8. The traditional evolutionist studies, only the forms of culture but not the processes involved in cultural development.

9. Classical evolutionists neglected adequate examination of archaeological data where empirical tests for their hypothesis could be found.

I shall not attempt to defend classical evolutionism here, but I will only comment that although the early evolutionists made errors in the detailed postulations of evolutionary stages, it is not altogether correct to assume that they were not aware of the factors of diffusion and functional interrelationship of culture traits. In any case, liberated from the bondage of evolutionism as its central problem, cultural anthropology took mainly two directions: (a) functional analysis of cultural and social structure, and (b) intensive empirical study of the unique pattern of the change of specific cultures. American anthropologists mainly took the latter direction, developing the tradition of acculturation studies with special emphasis on the role of the individual, which in its turn, promoted the various approaches in the study of culture and personality.

This critical and empirically oriented stimulus of the Boas tradition thus led to a vast collection of data on the unique pattern of development of individual cultures. However, this devoted effort at particularization seems to have met its logical limit. For some years past we find a creative unrest and

renewed interest among American anthropologists in developing broad generalizations on the basis of the collected data. One of the minor trends of this development is a renewed interest in evolutionism. This new intellectual movement has come to be known as neo-evolutionism.

The present essay will examine the neo-evolutionary approach in order to find out whether a reformulated version of evolution may stimulate further useful intensive research or if we are justified in making the burial of evolutionism permanent.

Dr. Steward, in his essay 'Evolution and Process', classifies the students of evolution into three groups: 'Cultural evolution then, may be defined broadly as a quest for regularities or laws; but there are three distinctive ways in which evolutionary data may be handled. First, *unilinear evolution*, the classical nineteenth century formulation, dealt with particular cultures, placing them in stages of a universal sequence. Second, *universal evolution*, a rather arbitrary label to designate the modern revamping of unilinear evolution, is concerned with culture than with cultures. Third, *multilinear evolution*, a somewhat less ambitious approach than the other two, is like unilinear evolution in dealing with particular cultures, but it is distinctive in searching for parallels of limited occurrence instead of universals' (Steward 1952, p. 315).

Dr. White, who has been labelled as a universal evolutionist in Steward's classification, does not accept this trichotomy and comments: 'Dr. Steward's unilinear category, it seems to me, is simply an aspect of what he calls "universal evolution" '.

'If by "unilinear" he means, as I think he says, to refer to the evolution of particular cultures and if these cultures followed one and the same line, then evolution is universal. If they do not follow one and the same line, then it is multilinear; so that it seems to me that it would be better to have a classification with only multilinear and unilinear categories. As I say it is not an either-or proposition. Each term implies the other' (Tax 1953, p. 71).

Without taking sides in this terminological battle we may say that the approaches of White and Childe on the one hand

and Steward on the other, are quite significantly different. So, for our purpose, we shall examine them separately.

### *The So-called Universal Evolutionists*

#### **V. Gordon Childe**

With the publication of *Man makes Himself* in 1936, Childe may be regarded as the pioneer of the neo-evolutionary trend in anthropology. Being an outstanding archaeologist, he uses prehistoric archaeological data in support of the broad categories of evolutionary stages of Morgan: Palaeolithic Savagery, Neolithic Barbarism, Higher Barbarism of the Copper Age, Early Bronze Age Civilization, and so on (Childe 1942).

Although presenting an overall picture of unilinear evolution, Childe is fully conscious of the factor of diffusion: 'Diffusion is a fact. The transfer of materials from one territory to another is archaeologically demonstrated from the Old Stone Age onwards... Evolutionists never denied it' (Childe 1951, pp. 13-14). He clearly recognizes the untenability of the details of classical evolutionary formulations: 'Fresh data accumulated by more recent field studies, conducted more and more by trained investigators, with increasingly refined techniques of observation, have played havoc with the contents of Morgan's scheme ..... It would therefore be pointless even to summarize Morgan's accounts of the several stages of economic, political or kinship organization. In details it is untenable. Yet it remains the best attempt of its kind' (Childe 1951, p. 11).

In his latest book, *Social Evolution*, he analyzes the 'successive steps through which barbarian cultures actually passed on the road to civilization in contrasted natural environments'. He finds that 'the final result—civilization—was actually very different in each case,' although there were broad similarities in the economic and material spheres of these cultures. He is also clear that 'the intervening steps in development do not exhibit even abstract parallelism' (Childe 1951, p. 161). Thus according to Childe, evolutionism does not necessarily involve parallelism

in development. 'Divergence' and 'Differentiation' are as much expected in organic as in cultural evolution. This seems to indicate that Childe accepts evolution to be multi-linear in character.

In the field of equating contemporary savages with prehistoric cultures, Childe shows adequate caution : 'Perhaps one final warning is desirable. Contemporary savages have just been described as living in Stone Age to-day. They have not, in fact, progressed beyond a Stone Age economy. That does not justify the assumption that Stone Age men, living in Europe or the Near East 6000 or 20,000 years ago, observed the same sort of social and ritual rules, entertained the same beliefs, or organized their family relationships along the same lines as modern peoples on a comparable level of economic development' (Childe 1936, p. 42).

Childe's evolutionism revolves around the concept of 'progress' as its central theme and his stages of evolution are marked by a revolution in economy. He attempts to set up objective criteria of 'progress' in terms of 'biological success' and 'multiplication of our species'. An avowed admirer of Marx, he postulates a kind of economic determinism in his analysis of evolution of culture : 'It is thus economy which determines the multiplication of our species, and so its biological success. Studied from this angle, the old archaeological divisions assume a new significance. Each new "age" is ushered in by an economic revolution of the same kind and having the same effect as the "Industrial Revolution" of the eighteenth century' (Childe 1933, p. 39).

Beals and Hoijer comment on Childe's economic determinism in the following words : 'It is pertinent to ask how technological and economic changes, aspects of culture itself, come to be regarded as independent variables producing dependent changes on culture' (Beals and Hoijer 1953, p. 623).

Redfield, in his *The Primitive World and its Transformation* posits a different view of cultural evolution. In his opinion man's passive adaptation to technological change covers only half the story : 'Man makes himself, then in two senses, and

the two senses imply a contrast between folk society and, at least, modern civilization. 'Man is self-made through the slow and unpremeditated growth of culture and civilization. Man later attempts to take control of this process and to direct it where he wills' (Redfield 1953, p. 113).

In Redfield's opinion the role of 'ideas' has to be taken into consideration in the study of cultural transformation. He introduces the concepts of 'moral order' and 'technical order' as two categories of integrative factors in culture. Moral order unites human groups by 'common understanding to the ultimate nature and purpose of life'. Technical order unites human groups in the use of common technology. The development of civilization is to be viewed in terms of the transformation of both the moral order and the technical order. Coming back to Childe, we may point to the following as his positive contributions :

1. By directly examining archaeological data he has laid the empirical foundation of evolution which was otherwise lacking in the speculative reconstructions of the early evolutionists.
2. He has openly accepted the factor of diffusion as causing similarity.
3. Although maintaining an overall unidirectionality in cultural evolution, he points out that diversification and multi-linear development have also been a part of the process.
4. He has categorically rejected the notions of universal precedence of matriarchate, sexual communism and such token concepts of classical evolutionists.
5. By introducing the concept of technological determinism he has shown awareness of the problem of *process* in change.

Basing his conclusions mainly on archaeological data, Childe had to limit the scope of his interpretations. But within this limitation he did a very useful job of clarification on broad fundamentals.

### **Leslie A. White**

White, a student of cultural anthropology proper, presented his reformulation of evolutionism in precise and sharp terms.

His views may be summarized into the following basic themes :

1. The evolutionary stages are abstractions applicable to the growth of human culture in general. It is not to be confused with the reconstruction of culture-history of specific peoples.
2. Evolution, Diffusion and Functionalism are mutually complementary approaches with no contradiction. Evolutionary approach combines functional analysis with time depth.
3. Technology is the basic determinant of cultural evolution.
4. Cultural evolution is to be studied entirely on cultural-logical level.

In 'Diffusion vs. Evolution—an anti-evolutionary Fallacy'. White points out that : 'Evolution and diffusion work together, one process originates, the other diffuses' (White 1949, p. 342). In the same article he gives quite a few quotations from Morgan and Tylor to prove that they were aware of the factor of diffusion and its importance. White contends that the confusion arose because 'the Boas school has confused "evolution of culture" with "culture history of peoples"'. The evolutionists worked out formulas which said that a culture trait or complex B has grown out of a trait or complex A, and is developing into, or towards, trait or complex C. In other words, they describe a cultural process in terms of stages of development. They say nothing about peoples or tribes. They do not say that a tribe has to go through stages A and B before arriving at stage C. They know fully well that a tribe can obtain culture of the stage C by diffusion without ever going through the stages A and B.

'But the Boas school has tried to apply these formulas that describe a process of cultural development to the culture history of people. Naturally the attempt failed ; the cultural formulae have nothing to do with people' (White 1949, p. 343).

White's treatment of 'cultural evolution at a level of abstraction not referable to particular culture histories of peoples' is not free from ambiguity. The conception of human culture as a whole as an abstract unit may be quite profitable for analytical purposes, but if the generalizations thus postulated

are not referable to particular culture histories then the scheme would just form a tightly knit closed system of formal consistency, not relatable to the kinds of problems that challenge the anthropologist in the field.

White does not explicitly state his opinion on whether an empirically defined time-perspective is a prerequisite for setting up culture traits in formal evolutionary series. However, he seems implicitly to lend support to the classical evolutionary *comparative method* whereby formal developmental series, irrespective of time and place co-ordinates, are translated into temporal terms.

In, 'History, Evolutionism and Functionalism' (White 1947), he considers evolutionism as a temporal-formal process, where the student is concerned with the change in time which forms and functions undergo. Thus functionalism is an integral part of evolutionism.

But the analysis of evolution, he asserts, should be strictly limited to 'culturalogical' level: 'Our sketch of evolution is, it will be noted, wholly culturalogical. It does not resort to race, physical type, intelligence, a moral sense, the dignity of man, the spirit of progress, or democracy, the individual—genius or otherwise, the rejection of the father, consciousness of kind, a set of instincts or "drives", social interaction, a basic personality structure, toilet training in infancy, or breast feeding vs. bottle feeding and weaning, to account for the behaviour and the growth of this extra-somatic tradition..... Culture is, as we have repeatedly pointed out, a stream of interacting elements; one trait reacts upon others and is affected by them in return. Some elements become obsolete and are eliminated; new elements are incorporated into it. New permutations, combinations and syntheses are continually being formed.....the principle of interpretation is the same: culture grows out of culture' (White 1949 a, p. 392).

Kroeber nearly agrees with White that establishment of cultural laws may be possible primarily in terms of relations of cultural forms. However, he points out that these laws should not be taken as laws of 'efficient causality' (Kroeber 1952, p. 114). Julian Steward also prefers evolutionary interpre-

tations on super-organic level. But, like Kroeber, he is conscious of the limitations of a super-organic interpretations: 'super-organic formulations do not, of course, provide the deeper explanations of culture change that may come from a psychological and biological level. Research on these levels may run concurrently with the other, but for the present, their formulations will be more applicable to synchronic, functional studies than to sequential ones' (Steward 1949, p. 6).

In laying emphasis on technological determinism in cultural evolution, White seems to be even more explicit than Childe: 'We may view cultural system as a series of three horizontal strata: the technological layer at the bottom, the philosophical on the top, the sociological stratum in between...the technological system is basic and primary. Social systems are functions of technologies; and philosophies express technological forces and reflect the social system. The technological factor is therefore the determinant of the cultural system as a whole... This is not to say that social systems do not condition the operation of technologies or that social and technological systems are not affected by philosophies. They do and they are. But to condition is one thing; to determine, quite another' (White 1949a, p. 366). And again, 'We can now formulate the basic law of cultural evolution: other factors remaining constant, culture evolves as energy harnessed per capita per year is increased, or as the efficiency of the instrumental means of putting the energy to work is increased' (White 1949a, p. 368-9).

Keeping the above basic tenets of evolution in mind, White makes an interpretative analysis of evolution as follows: 'On the international level, too, an interesting trend of social evolution can be discerned; movement towards ever larger and larger political units. The agricultural technology replaced villages with cities, tribes with nations and empires. The modern fuel technology is working towards larger political groupings, fewer concentration of political power.....A half dozen or so World Powers engaged in the first World War; only two emerged from the second. The competition for power narrows as contestants are eliminated. The logical conclusion

is, however, not simply the domination of the world by a single nation—this would be but a transitional stage—but a single political organisation that will embrace the entire planet and the whole human race. Toward such a denouement is our power technology rapidly moving us (White 1949, pp. 388-389). White's criteria of 'harnessing of energy' seems to be more fundamental as a factor in evolution than Childe's criteria of 'tool-types'.

White's analysis impresses upon us the reality of the profound influence of technology upon other aspects of culture. But I feel reluctant to label this process as 'determinism'. There are many examples of the same technological culture environment supporting varieties of social systems and ideologies. We may cite an example from India. Living in the same technological set-up, while the Marxist political leaders have spoken in favour of quick expansion of heavy industrialization, Gandhi and his followers stood emphatically against intensive industrialization and were able to gain considerable popular support in favour of their point of view. The possibility of the existence of various philosophies goes to prove that philosophy need not always be neatly and wholly determined by technology, but it may itself modify the course of technological change to a certain extent. White's hope that the world would inevitably drift towards one super-state, may not come true. There may be reasons other than technological efficiency, why men may find decentralization of political authority better than its extreme centralization. And if that is so, that may eventually lead to a decentralization of technological control instead of the extreme centralization towards which mankind seems to be drifting unwillingly for purposes of mechanical efficiency.

In any case, it is good to remember that man and his ideas may also exercise a critical influence on the course of technological development. Under such circumstances, it seems desirable that we should cease to regard technology as the supreme determinant in human culture. It is better perhaps to be satisfied with a factor like the 'satisfaction of the psycho-

logical drives of the individual' as a great factor in cultural evolution.

In this connection I feel tempted to quote N. K. Bose who, in the course of comparison between Marxism and Gandhism, advances a different point of view. 'I find it hard to accept the superorganic theory, even in its modified form, as the last word in describing the relation between man and his culture... There is no doubt that most men generally function in a passive manner ; this saves them from the expenditure of a large store of nervous energy. But they can behave in a different way also. There have been moments in history when the active element has asserted itself in individuals, as well as in large masses of mankind, and given culture, including the course of economic events, an unexpected turn. That such occasions have been rare, is due to the fact that men like to avoid the sufferings consequent upon every change, and thus conserve their nervous energy. And it is this inner acquiescence, born out of conservatism, which gives culture its apparent power to rule over the lives of men' (Bose 1947, p. 8-9).

We may now point to the following as the positive contributions of White :

1. He showed that evolutionism is compatible with functionalism and diffusion.
2. He showed how analysis of cultural evolution can be facilitated if we can treat culture at a level of formal abstraction unrelated to the culture history of particular peoples.
3. He showed to what extent evolutionary explanations may be profitably pursued on the culturalogical level.
4. Finally, in his sweeping treatment of the evolution of human culture as a whole he has focussed our attention upon an overall progressive development of technology and range of social relationship.

In his proselytising zeal as a true disciple of his spiritual teacher Morgan, White has perhaps overstated his case as we have already pointed out in our criticisms.

Now let us turn our attention to multilinear evolutionism.

## *The So-called Multilinear Evolutionists*

**Julian H. Steward**

Steward's approach may be distinguished from that of White mainly on the following points :

1. He considers that the study of evolution of human culture as a whole is not his immediate objective.
2. His formulations are derived from the analysis of culture history of particular peoples and referable to particular cultures.
3. Although his limited generalizations are derived on the culturalogical level he is conscious of the limitations of this approach.
4. He does not postulate economic determinism.
5. He does not include the concept of 'progress' in his evolutionary study.

Steward comments on White and Childe in the following terms : 'The postulated cultural sequences are so general that they are neither very arguable nor very acceptable' (Steward 1952, p. 312). And again, 'It is interesting that White's discussions make no reference to his own extensive and detailed studies of the Pueblo Indians and Childe's superb knowledge of developmental patterns and processes which are disclosed in his archaeology of the Near East and Europe almost becomes an embarrassment in his theoretical discussions' (Steward 1952, p. 317). Steward wants his generalizations to be firmly based on intensive study of particular cultures. Multilinear evolution is essentially a methodology based on the assumption that regularities in culture change occur, and it is concerned with the determination of cultural laws. It is inevitably concerned with historical reconstruction but it does not expect that, historical data can be classified in universal stages.....it deals only with limited parallels of form, function and sequence which have empirical validity ... Multilinear evolution, therefore, has no a priori scheme or laws' (Steward 1952, p. 318). It is evident that Steward's methodology refers to a different level of abstraction than that of White. He applies this methodology in the analysis of the developmental sequence of early

agricultural civilizations in North Peru, Meso-America (Mexico and Maya), Mesopotamia, Egypt and China and finds broad parallelism in each passing through the following developmental series: incipient agriculture, formative period, regional florescence, initial conquest, dark ages, cyclical conquest, Iron Age culture and industrial revolution (Steward 1949). This study is mainly concerned with setting up typology in the developmental level of the forms of total cultures; it does not deal with the evolution of separate culture traits.

Steward distinguishes evolutionary studies from the ordinary studies of culture change, in the use of the concept of 'organizational type' and 'levels of integration' in the case of the former: 'whereas relativism seems to hold that a rather fixed and qualitatively unique pattern persists in each cultural change, despite cumulative changes which create quantitative complexity, it is implicit in the evolutionary view that developmental levels are marked by qualitatively distinct patterns or types of organization' (Steward 1952, p. 314). Coon uses this concept in the organization of his *A Reader in General Anthropology*, and in New World archaeology analysis in terms of 'developmental sequence of functionally integrated cultural wholes' has become an established methodology.

Although Steward is deeply interested in the functional interrelationship of ecology, technology and socio-political structure, he never postulated an absolute economic determinism. He finds in the mutual interaction of technology and environment a limiting factor in the size of the socially clustered population in a community and thus setting a limit to the range of complexity in socio-political structure.

On the whole, Steward's approach is very cautious and less controversial. His study is as yet concerned with forms of developmental levels rather than with the processes of development. Emphasis on the concept of qualitatively distinct developmental level seems to be Steward's most significant contribution to evolutionary theory.

### *The Future*

In the light of our discussion of neo-evolutionism we may

lay down the following basic tenets as a clarified version of evolutionism :

1. Evolutionism seeks to find out regularities in the general process of culture change through time. It studies successions of forms (as also the processes involved) with reference to specific culture traits or whole cultures.

2. Evolutionism may be studied with the broad canvas of human culture as a whole or in terms of growth of a limited number of cultures.

3. Evolutionism does not necessarily involve a presupposition of inviolable laws or determinism—it only tries to find out if there are regularities, in detail and in overall direction, in the development of cultures.

4. Diffusion, functionalism and evolutionism are mutually complementary approaches. Diffusion does not negate evolution and functionalism is always implied in the conception of developmental level.

5. Evolutionism is distinct from the ordinary study of culture change in that the former is concerned with only that aspect of change which leads a 'culture complex' or 'whole culture' to attain a qualitatively new level of integration.

6. Unilineal evolution and multilineal evolution are not contradictory approaches. While the former tries to find out to what extent there has been an overall unidirectional development in human culture as a whole, the latter studies the diversity of directions in developmental levels through which different groups of specific cultures have passed.

7. So far, evolutionary studies have been more profitably done on the cultural level. This is partly because archaeological data, which provides historical depth, cannot be adequately handled on other levels. It also seems advisable to maintain this approach as the first step in evolutionary analysis of contemporary cultures. But this does not necessarily mean that attempts towards psycho-biological explanations should not be made at all.

It may be argued that evolutionism, if it necessarily involves the study of human culture from prehistoric depths, will have access to only limited aspects of culture;

whereas intensive functional study of cultural equilibrium or change of contemporary cultures provides much more scope for understanding cultural processes. To what extent can the evolutionary approach utilize an intensive study of contemporary cultures? White has given us no indications in this direction. It seems to me that without this, evolutionism will be little more than just a broad intellectual framework.

From Childe and White we derive the following three mutually related generalizations :

1. There has been progressive evolution in technology.

2. There has been progressive evolution in the direction of enlarging the range of social relationship.

3. Technology determines the range of social ties.

[I venture to suggest that in the field of religion we can find a somewhat similar unidirectional development taking human culture as a whole, namely—pre-ethically neutral primitive supernaturalism, as represented by the so-called primitive tribal religions all over the world, to ethically oriented supernaturalism, like Christianity, Mohammedanism, Hinduism etc., and finally to scientific rationalism, as represented nowhere on a group level but only among specialized individuals, mainly in highly industrialized communities. It should be made clear that the term 'ethics' has been used here in a purely relativistic sense, namely, as defined by the particular culture and we are not implying absence of the concept of the 'good man' in any culture. By pre-ethical or ethically neutral supernaturalism I mean that supernaturalism is not harnessed to elevate the moral stature of the individual even when the moral stature is defined in terms of the specific culture concerned. Again, it should be made clear that this conception of stages has validity only so long as we treat them at a level of formal abstraction, considering human culture as a whole and implying time dimension that the first emergence of the second level or stage followed the first and similarly the third level followed the second. Although we have empirical historical knowledge of actual cases of the emergence of scientific rationalism from ethical supernaturalism, we do not have as

yet a single case study of the process of emergence of ethical religion from primitive supernaturalism. We only know that outstanding creative individuals like Christ, Mohammed or Buddha played very significant roles in giving an active shape to these concepts. It would be extremely interesting to follow how far these evolutionary stages of religion are correlatable to the socio-technological stages of evolution. Although we find that the historically recorded emergence of the eminent ethically oriented religions tie them to some sort of urbanization, our reports on the religions of the intensely urbanized Aztecs or the Incas do not give any indication of ethical orientation in them. On the other hand, although it is true that we find scientific rationalism mainly associated with industrial civilizations, we have records of similar ideologies in the pre-industrial urban culture of India, in the materialistic rationalism of Charvak. And also, there are numerous cases of people actively involved in scientific research maintaining deep loyalty to ethical supernaturalism. These tend to indicate that although we may find significant quantitative correspondence between socio-technological stages and our postulated stages of religion, there are enough exceptions to prevent us from linking them in straight causative terms.]

From these limited insights that we have gained in the analysis of cultural evolution, we may approach the study of contemporary cultures with the following perspective in view : 'to what extent are the overall directions of cultural evolution observable in the culture history of the particular people under investigation'? Instead of observing just 'what happened' we may proceed with the following working hypothesis :

1. Normally people are expected to strive in the direction of improved technology either through independent innovation or through cultural contact. (If contrary phenomena are found, what are the factors involved? If the hypothesis be found applicable, we have to look to the special processes involved, including the role of the individual).

2. Introduction of a distinctly improved technique of production is likely to widen the range of social relationships.

Here again the actual processes involved have to be pursued, including the role of the individual.

In both cases, we shall have to intensely observe human groups in action both as passive recipients of innovations as also as actively striving and creating technological and social innovations. These types of studies will prove specially profitable where a tribal society, with hunting-collecting economy, is being transformed into a peasant society, or where a peasant society is being transformed into an urban society. Intensive study of these situations, with the concept of 'level of integration' in view, will expand our understanding of cultural evolution beyond 'interrelation of technology and socio-political structure'. It will sharpen our understanding on the relatively stable integrating factors in culture as also on the significant processes involved in cultural change. The vital concept of evolution demands utilization of this active role. So its permanent burial is out of the question.

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## THE CULT OF THE VILLAGE GODS OF WEST BENGAL

*By ASUTOSH BHATTACHARYYA*

THE cult of the village gods is still the most powerful unifying factor of Indian village life, although it is now in a state of disintegration. The blessings of the gods are invoked on behalf of the whole village at times of general calamities like epidemics or droughts. The most interesting aspect of the cult is that no village god responds to any personal or individual prayer. With the breakdown of the communal life of the villages, most of the early traits of the cult have already disappeared and the few which still remain are holding their own against heavy odds. In those districts of West Bengal which border on the western boundary of the province, the cult of the village gods is very widely distributed. A large part of Central Bengal, specially the two sides of the Ganges, has been spread over by Hinduism, and as a result, Hinduism has established its ascendancy over the existing local cults. As the overwhelming majority of the people of East Bengal is Muslim by religion, the cult of the village gods is almost non-existent there now-a-days.

Though the worship of village gods is undoubtedly one of the ancient forms of popular religion in India, the cult as it exists to-day in West Bengal has been modified to a very great extent by Hinduism within recent years. But in some of the details of the cults, their distinctive character is sometimes retained with admirable fidelity. Some characteristic features of the cults are being detailed below.

I have already stated that in the cult of the village gods no individual prayer is responded to by the deity. Notwithstanding the growing influence of individual worship or personal prayer, the chief characteristic of Hinduism, the cult of the village gods still retains its communal character to a very great extent. Even in villages where Hindu infiltration has been

considerable, a system of worship known as *baroyari puja* has been evolved out of the primitive community worship. In *baroyari puja*, distinction of caste and creed established by Hinduism is not recognized, though in a predominantly Hindu village the service of a Brahmin priest is requisitioned. In the western districts of West Bengal sometimes a Domi, an outcaste, acts as the priest in the communal worship of a deity known as Dharma Thakur. The service of Brahmins is not generally resorted to by the common village folk, but sometimes they cannot help, as the village zemindars, who come from the higher castes, insist on it with all the resources at their command. The *baroyari* worship of rural Bengal has been urbanized as *sarvajanin puja* in course of the last few years.

Rites observed in worshipping the village gods are very much different from those of the orthodox Hindu divinities. The village gods essentially 'symbolize only the facts of village life', but the Puranic Hindu gods have certainly a wider jurisdiction. The village gods are related not with any Supreme Cause, but to such 'simple facts as cholera, smallpox and cattle diseases' and other day-to-day needs of the simple village people.

In most cases the village deities are conceived as females. Sometimes the deities of the different villages are supposed to be related to one another as sisters; the most common number being seven. One of the most important characteristics of the village deities is that they are invariably worshipped with animal sacrifices. Unorthodox sacrifices of pigs and chickens are also offered in such villages.

The priests of the village gods are not Brahmins. They generally hail from the Hinduized aborigines. In the district of Manbhum bordering on the districts of Bankura and Burdwan in West Bengal, a class of people known as Laya or Naya (derived from Sanskrit *Nayaka*, meaning village headman), acts as the priest of village gods in every village. In primitive society priesthood was the function of the village headman, and this is also suggested by the surname of the priests of the village gods, Naya, who must have held this position in earlier times. Though the position and social status of the Naya or

Laya have now deteriorated due to various causes, yet they still retain the function of priesthood of the village deities. In West Bengal the priests of the village gods are known as Dyasis, a word of doubtful origin, but now Sanskritized into Devamsi, meaning a part and parcel of the gods, or Devavasi, the associate of the gods.

The names of the village gods vary from place to place, though only a few names are also common in some villages. The names are mostly derived from non-Aryan sources like Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. Due to the influence of Hinduism, a tendency has recently developed to Sanskritize the names at the cost of their original forms. For example, the goddess Vasuli, obviously a non-Aryan name, is sometimes called Visalaksi, meaning in Sanskrit, one with broad eyes. Due to the same reason, some deities are now being identified with the higher Hindu gods like Siva and Vishnu. Even in such cases their distinguishing features are retained in their character. Though most of the male deities have now come under the general appellation of Siva or Dharma, yet sometimes the non-Puranic local names are prefixed to Siva or Dharma, by which one is distinguished from the other. Certain female deities are also known by the general terms, Kali and Chandi; though they are also distinguished from one another by prefixing certain local names to them. For example, though Siva is one distinct god in the Puranas and one of the members of the Hindu Trinity, in rural Bengal he is attributed divers characters and such distinguishing names as Tarakesvar Siva, Ektesvar Siva, Mahulesvar Siva, Radhesvar Siva and so on. Similar is the case with the general appellation of the female deities Chandi and Kali. They are suffixed to the names of the village deities so as to indicate their Puranic affiliation. In the village of Shaltora in the district of Bankura, the name of the village deity is Jamlala, a word not easily explicable. The people claim that there was a black berry (*jam*) tree above the place where her shrine is now situated. Jamlala is believed to be one of the seven sisters who preside over the seven neighbouring villages. The names of the other sisters are still remembered by the villagers—they

are Vilasini, Kankud Kevadi, Jasoda, Kajiyam, Vasuli and Chandi, who are worshipped in the following villages of the Bankura district respectively, Jhanka, Shyampur, Shampoda, Ledapash, Sivarvida and Upargoda. The tradition of the goddesses of neighbouring villages being related as sisters is widely distributed throughout aboriginal and semi-aboriginal areas in India. The number of the sisters varies, but it must be one of the following, three, five, seven, nine, eleven ; at any rate, an odd number.

Sometimes the suffix *budi*, meaning an old woman, is added to the local name of a village goddess. Not very far from the industrial town of Asansol in the district of Burdwan, there is a village goddess who is known as Ghagar-*budi*, i. e., the old woman named Ghagar. She is also believed to be one of the seven *budis* or old women related as sisters to one another. But the names of the old women and the villages over which they were believed to preside, are now all lost.

In West Bengal there are many villages, the names of which have been derived from the village deities worshipped in them. Sometimes the deity is known by the name of the village over which it is believed to preside. Chandipur, meaning the abode of Chandi, Kalipur meaning the abode of the goddess Kali, are very common names for Bengal villages.

The characters of the village deities are not always identical. In the area over which Hindu influence has been most effective, the character of the village gods has been modified to a large extent. Besides the influence of orthodox Hinduism there have been other external influences too. There was a time when Buddhism and Jainism exercised considerable influence over a vast area of West Bengal. Traces of both these religions lie scattered throughout the districts of Burdwan, Bankura and Birbhum. In the beginning of the thirteenth century A. D., came the Muslims and established their hold over a considerable part of West Bengal. Leaving aside the later Christian missionary influences, which are very insignificant over this area, the above influences have been instrumental in modifying the character of the local cults in various ways.

It is not a fact that the village gods are always considered to be evil spirits. Sometimes they are looked upon as benefactors too. But no deity is considered either as exclusively malignant or beneficent. But one thing is definite about them—in case of neglect of their routine worship, they take violent retaliation. At the same time, when the villagers are confident that there was no loophole in the due celebration of the scheduled worship, and yet if calamities occur, the deities are sometimes 'punished' for not responding to their worship. In the village Khudkura in the Burdwan district, when drought occurs, a special worship is offered to the village deity for bringing speedy rain. But if rainfall is still delayed, the crude stone representing the deity is disturbed in its seat under the shade of a mud hut, exposed to the sun for some time as a measure of punishment. The villagers declare that this action is resorted to as an extreme measure.

I have already stated that the village gods of West Bengal are seldom considered to be evil spirits. For the villagers depend on them for the general welfare of their community. They are never afraid of them if regular worship is offered at scheduled times. Barren women approach them for cures, the sick approach them for recovery from illness ; worship is offered to them before sowing and after harvesting in recognition of their blessings. Therefore, the beneficent rather than the malignant aspect of their character is more pronounced. Some gods are however looked upon as malignant in character. Thus, in a village named Sibpur in the north-west of the district of Burdwan there is a village god whose name is Mahadana, meaning the great demon. He is believed to be of enormous size as testified by some benighted passers-by. The head of Mahadana touches the sky above and his two legs stretch as far as the two opposite horizons. The unfortunate person who happens to see this sight of horror is supposed to die soon after. The god brings in epidemics of cholera and smallpox. There is a god in the village Nagari, only a few miles from Suri, the district headquarters of Birbhum. This god is known as Brahmadaitya, which is obviously a Sanskritized

name meaning the ghost of a Brahmin. It is generally believed throughout Bengal that if a Brahmin meets with a violent death, his soul cannot attain salvation or rebirth. It becomes a restless spirit. Therefore, it seems that some Brahmin might have met with a violent death at the spot where stands the shrine to-day. There is an unidentified tree above the shrine. The spirit is believed to perch on the branches of the tree. In course of time the spirit has been turned into a village god with some modification in his character. As the origin of the god is based on some supposed violent action, he has naturally been conceived of as bearing a violent character himself. Death due to accidents is attributed to him. Nobody dares to touch a leaf of the tree on which the god is supposed to reside.

There are certain village gods who are conceived as the night-watchers of the villages. They have no other duty to perform and as such they are certainly of benevolent character. In the neighbouring village of Nagara mentioned above, there is a village god who is known as Berar Dana or the demon of Bera. Perhaps the original name of the village was Bera, though it is not nowadays known by that name. There is nothing of demonical character in Berar Dana. He is considered as the night-watchman of the village. Clay horses are offered to him. It is claimed that at dead of night he goes round the village boundary riding on one of the horses offered. Attempts at trespass are punished by immediate death. During rainy season the god goes on foot wearing wooden sandals, as the hoofs of the horse sink deep in the mud. The marks of the wooden sandal on mud are claimed to have been seen by almost every villager. If anybody keeps awake during the night he hears the sound of his footsteps. During day-time the god has no work to perform and is believed to take rest on the branch of any lonely tree, but not necessarily near his shrine. I was able to collect the following names of the village gods of Birbhum within an approximate area of five sq. miles : Akul Ray, Pahar Thakur, Chordana, Phensera Dana, Sirka Mosna, Ban Simha, Malanche, Mohan Giri, Garbha Konar, Bagh Rai, Chandi, Khajuria, Berar Dana, Berar

Mahapurush, Kana Mejhen, Bonga Bongi and so on. Among these Garbha Konar is the spirit of a child which dies in the womb of its mother. Throughout aboriginal and semi-aboriginal India the spirits of women who die at childbirth as well as those of the children who die in their mothers' womb, are most dreaded. Kana Mejhen mentioned above must be the spirit of an one-eyed Santal woman who earned notoriety in magical practices or witchcraft.

The village gods generally reside under lonely trees, not always very close to human habitations. Sometimes, according to the circumstances of the villagers, a mud-hut is raised for them ; but in such cases the straw-roofs are left uncared for for years. Most of the areas of the districts of Bankura, Burdwan and Birbhum now belong to the Hindu zemindars of Burdwan and Cossimbazar. Brick-built shrines have now been constructed in many places through their donations. Sometimes, local wealthy persons also donate land and the requisite money for this purpose. Occasionally Hindu, Buddhist or Jaina temples abandoned for a long time are also converted into shrines for the village gods. But usually village gods have to rest satisfied with their abodes under lonely trees. The trees under which such shrines develop are also considered objects of veneration. Nobody dares to touch a leaf of such trees which grow in size as the years roll by. When such trees die a natural death or are uprooted by heavy storm, the villagers do not dare to use them as fuel nor are they burnt in any other way ; they are generally thrown into water. In the course of time, trees also become part and parcel of the shrines themselves. If due to some natural calamity the tree withers away leaving no trace behind, the shrine is *not* removed from the place, but it continues to stay at the open space as long as the tradition remains. Therefore, in many places shrines are seen in open spaces not actually under any tree. Such open spaces are generally marked either by a piece of big stone besmeared with vermillion or by an iron stake stuck into the ground. Huts are also sometimes built in such places by raising subscriptions in cash and in kind from among .

the villagers. Sometimes only mud platforms are built with the symbols of the deities placed on them.

The village gods have no standard symbols or images to represent them. Such symbols are almost as 'diverse as their 'names'. Sometimes they are crude pieces of small pebbles collected from the neighbourhood. Occasionally picked up pieces of abandoned Hindu, Buddhist or Jaina images are also utilized as symbols of the village gods. Sometimes such images are given new local names and worshipped by the villagers in their own way. In a village named Pakbidra in the district of Manbhum bordering on Bankura in West Bengal, a colossal Jain image representing Mahavira carved in black stone, eight feet in height, is worshipped under the name of Kal Bhairav or the fearful Bhairava. Local legends describe him as the night-watchman of the paddy fields. Animals including chickens and pigs are freely sacrificed to him during annual or casual ceremonies held by the villagers. In the village named Jhunka, in the Bankura district, a clearly distinguishable Jaina image, much smaller in size, is worshipped as the village deity. Notwithstanding extensive collection of archaeological specimens made from the different parts of India, quite a large number of them still lie scattered throughout the country where they have been developing their own folklore.

Besides the above there are other symbols of the village gods. In some places, simply an iron stake, spear or trident stuck into the ground represents the village god. The trident, known as *trisula*, must have come from the Hindus as it is believed to be carried by Siva, the Puranic god, in his hand. Stones of various sizes are also sometimes arranged on the both sides of the stake. The other stones in such cases represent the associates of the principal village gods. Sometimes wooden posts roughly carved at the top, also represent the village deities, though they have become very rare nowadays. On rare occasions small mounds of earth conically shaped and raised on mud-platforms also represent the village deities and their associates. The mounds are made only during the annual worship and left uncared for after-

wards. When occasion arises new mounds are raised on the same spot.

In South India and West Bihar, clay horses are offered to the male gods Iyenar and Bir Kuar respectively, but in West Bengal they are offered to any and every god irrespective of sex and character, though more commonly to Dharma Thakur, the popular sun-god already referred to. At Kenduli in Birbhum, I saw a number of clay horses which were offered on the grave of a Hindu Tantric saint Kangal Kshepa. Clay horses are also offered to the deified Muslim Satyapir. Deposits of clay horses heaped beside the village shrines are common sights in the rural areas of West Bengal.

The ministrants of the village gods in West Bengal who are known as Deyasis come from the lower castes, e.g., Dom, Hadi, Bagdi, Bauri, Keyat, Mal and similar others ; there being no sacerdotal class exclusively assigned with this duty. Orthodox Brahmin priests dissociate themselves from this function. But in certain areas their services are requisitioned if available, only on special occasions. I visited a shrine in a village near Suri in Birbhum, in which Brahmins are denied admission by the Deyasis of the fishermen caste. This is a very rare example of bigotry not commonly met with among the lower classes of people in Bengal nowadays. As a matter of fact Brahmins are generally permitted to worship the village gods in their own way if they so desire on their own behalf. But the right of public worship is always retained by the Deyasi families. There is no bar, however, for any woman against acting as Deyasi. I met an elderly Bagdi woman in a village named Sibpur in the district of Burdwan who had been functioning as priestess of the village god there. She was a widow of about 60 years of age, and had long matted hair on her head. This fact is of particular importance to students of religious history. Due to the growing influence of Hinduism over the whole area the Deyasis have been using the surnames of the caste Hindus, and sometimes even of the Brahmins, in some places. Sometimes Brahmins of noble birth are also attracted to this profession through poverty, though at a considerable loss to their social status.

In more Hinduized villages the functions of the Deyasi and

the priest have been bifurcated. For example, there are many shrines in which Brahmins act as priests, but the proprietary rights are retained by the Deyasis. In such cases the Deyasis prescribe quack remedies in the name of the deity and perform other duties connected with the maintenance of the shrine, while the Brahmins offer worship to the deity in the orthodox Hindu way. The income of the shrine is shared by the two. With regard to a shrine at Bele in Birbhum a dispute, which arose out on the division of the income between the two, had to be finally settled in court. The Brahmin priest demanded a share of the income derived from distribution of quack medicines which is manufactured here on a commercial scale by the Deyasi. The latter having contested this, the priest approached the Court. According to the latter's decision both of them are now authorized to carry on trade in quack medicine in the name of the same deity. A high executive officer of Birbhum, told me that he himself could testify to the efficacy of the 'medicine' which both of them prescribe in the case of rheumatism.

There is seldom any ecclesiastical calendar to regulate the festivals or annual worships of the village gods of West Bengal. Generally, before sowing, the villagers collect subscriptions from among themselves and offer worship to the village deity. In some of the villages, however, no worship is held during this time, the reason being mainly economic. But after harvest the worship is invariably held in every village. The new rice ceremony which is known as *Navanna* is also held during this time by the higher class Hindus. No particular harvest deity is however invoked by the orthodox Hindus but offerings known as *Kakvali* (literally meaning offering to the crows) are given to the birds. But the communal worship of the village gods which is held immediately after harvest is of a different nature. In the villages where Hindu calendar is used the date is generally fixed for this purpose on the first day of the Bengali month of Magha (January-February), but in others any convenient day. In the latter case sometimes the date is fixed on the full-moon day. Sacrifices of goats and pigeons are offered on behalf of the

whole village, though in some remote parts of the state such unorthodox sacrifices as of pigs and fowls are still resorted to. In more important villages, fairs are held on this occasion in which stationery and cheap sweets are sold in large quantities. In the fairs public display of folk-dances are given by the villagers.

In normal times, no other public worship of the village gods is held, but if an epidemic breaks out or there is scarcity of rain, special worships are held. On such emergent occasions, the festive aspects of the celebrations are kept in abeyance, but care is taken to observe the rituals in their minutest detail, for they are meant for the propitiation of angry deities.

I now turn to give one or two concrete examples. The village goddess of Bagda bordering on Bankura in West Bengal is known as Daridrya-nasini. The village is predominantly inhabited by Brahmins though thickly surrounded on all sides by such low castes as Bauri, Keyat and Dom. It is obvious that owing to Hindu influence the original name of the deity has been replaced by this purely Saksritic name which literally means 'destroyer of poverty'.

In a thick arjuna grove (*Mirobalans arjuna*), the goddess in the form of a small piece of abandoned Jaina stone image besmeared with vermillion, lies surrounded by heaps of clay horses offered in worship to her by the rustic devotees. The deity is daily invoked in worship. The expenses thereof are met from the income of some landed property donated by the neighbouring Hindu zemindar of Kashipur. On the 13th day of the Bengali month of Magh (January-February), the annual worship is held with pomp and grandeur. On this occasion the Bhuiya priests assisted by Brahmins offer worship to the deity. The annual worship is accompanied by many modern items including gambling and dancing of the village prostitutes. Cock-fight forms one of the most exciting events of the fair. Various animals except chickens and pigs are sacrificed in large numbers on that day. Before sowing begins in the village, the goddess is invoked with an offering of *manui* (sun-dried rice boiled in milk mixed with sugar). In case of failure of rains, the village folk assemble before the deity and make fervent appeals to her.

The god of Laulara, a village not very far from Bagda mentioned above, is known as Khutamul. The village is inhabited by a number of Bengali Brahmins who do not generally take part in the worship of the deity. A Hinduized aboriginal with the surname Bhuiya officiates as the priest of deity.

Beneath a big thorny tree on the bank of the village tank resides the deity in the form of a trident. A piece of stone from an abandoned and broken Jaina image stained with marks of vermillion has also been kept at its side. The annual worship is held after harvesting on the twelfth day of the Bengali month of Magh when sacrifices of chicken, swan, goats and pigeons are made. The village is extremely poor. When no such offerings can be secured, clay horses are offered instead. Besides the annual worship the deity is also invoked in case of scarcity of rain or epidemics. In the latter case the Brahmins also participate in the worship.

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## THE DRAVIDIAN PROBLEM

By D. C. SIRCAR

*Ootacamund*

**O**N the basis of the result of archaeological excavations conducted at Brahmagiri in Mysore and other places in South India, studied and discussed by R. E. M. Wheeler, G. H. Gordon, Christop von Furer-Haimendorf and others, has emerged the following theory regarding the ancient history and civilization of Peninsular India.<sup>1</sup>

The lowest implementiferous stratum at Brahmagiri, a site bearing stone-circles of a type which is characteristic of many parts of the Deccan, has to be assigned to neolithic times. Its distinctive artifact is the axe of the pointed-butt type with polished cutting edge and oval section. This pointed-butt axe is widely distributed over Peninsular India. It is accompanied at Brahmagiri by pottery of a very crude hand-made type. The makers of this pottery and the neolithic axes appear to have been shifting cultivators who kept pigs and fowls but lacked domesticated cattle. Their culture was overlaid by a civilization characterized by the use of iron, a distinctive wheel-turned brown and black pottery and especially megalithic tombs containing stone-cists with 'port holes'. From excavations at Brahmagiri and a place in the Bellary District, it appears that this megalithic iron-using civilization did not grow out of the earlier neolithic culture of the area but had its roots elsewhere outside Peninsular India. Wheeler suggests 200 B. C. as the date for the beginning of the megalithic culture at Brahmagiri, while Furer-Haimendorf makes it 300 B. C. on the ground that the Asokan inscriptions of the vicinity could have hardly been put up amidst primitive folk living in neolithic style of life. But it is believed that the new megalithic civilization did not make its appearance in the Deccan long before 500 B. C. ; then it is supposed to have spread over the Deccan and large areas of South India with the amazing speed and dynamic force characteristic of a new and superior civilization. This type of

megalithic monuments in the shape of grave circles, dolmens and menhirs, found in the present Dravidian-speaking India and exhibiting in them only implements of iron and of no other metal, has not been found in North India with the exception of some groups of stone-cists near Karachi in West Pakistan. These Iron Age megalith-builders, whose civilization was an intrusion in South India, have been identified with the Dravidians. They could not have come from North India where Bronze Age cultures flourished, as any people coming from that area must have brought with them implements not only of iron but at least some also of bronze. They therefore entered the Deccan by sea and moved southward along the western coast of India. The striking similarity of these megalithic tombs and those of the Mediterranean area, which extends to so characteristic a feature as the 'port-holes' in the stone-cists, has been naturally taken to suggest Western association ; but it has also been noticed that the linking of South Indian megaliths of the latter half of the first millennium B. C. with those of the West, none of which can be dated later than the second millennium B. C., offers a chronological difficulty. The existence of the Dravidian-speaking Brahuis in Baluchistan and the stone-cists in the vicinity of Karachi has been explained by the suggestion that the Dravidians migrated by land or by sea along the coast and founded colonies at suitable sites, most of which are supposed to have been ultimately absorbed by the surrounding Aryan-speaking populations. Gordon suggests that the ships of this people plied between the South Arabian and West Indian coasts in the first half of the first millennium B.C. He considers the time between 700 and 400 B.C. as the most likely period of their immigration in the western parts of the Deccan. It is believed that there was no Dravidian-speaking population in North India except in the coastal areas of modern West Pakistan and that the belt of the primitive tribal population in the central parts of India constituted a barrier between the Aryan and Dravidian spheres, the gradual reduction of the belt beginning from the north and the south at about the same time, about the middle of the first millennium B. C.

We have some doubts about the plausibility of the theory

detailed above. Some of the grounds of our doubt are summarily discussed below.

The Maurya Emperor Asoka (circa 269-232 B. C.) had the headquarters of one of the administrative units of his empire at Isila (near Brahmagiri), where we have his edicts issued about the 12th year of his reign (circa 258 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> But there is some evidence to show that the Mysore area formed a part of the dominion not only of his grandfather Chandragupta in the last quarter of the 4th century B. C., but also of the Nandas, who preceded the Mauryas on the throne of Pataliputra, in the earlier quarters of that century.<sup>3</sup> Is it possible that the rulers of distant Pataliputra (near modern Patna in Bihar) cared to penetrate so far south in an age when practically the whole of the land to the south of the Vindhya range was almost entirely inhabited by primitive peoples?

The earliest Aryan kingdom in the Deccan seems to have been Vidarbha (modern Berar) which is mentioned in the pre-Buddhistic *Aitareya Brahmana* (VII, 34) as ruled by a king named Bhima. It is also mentioned in other works of later Vedic literature, such as the *Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana* (II, 440), the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (II, 5, 22; IV, 5, 28) and *Prasna Upanishad* (I, i). Its old capital has been identified with Kaundinyapura on the Wardha in the Chandur Taluk of the Amraoti District.<sup>4</sup> This shows that Berar in the Deccan was colonized by the Aryans long before 500 B. C. Buddhist canonical texts speak of Asmaka on the Godavari, with its capital Potana or Paudanya (modern Bodhan in Hyderabad) as a kingdom existing at the time of the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> Panini (IV, 1, 173), who flourished in the 5th century B. C., also mentions Asmaka. In the fourth century B. C., the grammarian Katyayana (under Panini, IV, i, 168 and 175) speaks of the Cholas and Pandyas and indicates the latter's association with the Pandu tribe of North India.<sup>6</sup> This association seems to be supported by the name of the Pandya capital, viz. the city of Madura (cf. Mathura or Madhura, capital of the Surasenas), and the confused stories related by Megasthenes in the fourth century B.C. regarding Hirakles and Pandaia.<sup>7</sup> In the third century B. C., Asoka mentions the Cholas and Pandyas of the Coromandel coast and

the Satiyas and Keralas of the Malabar coast as also Tamraparni or Ceylon, all of these countries lying to the south of the southern boundary of the Maurya Empire, i. e. to the south of Mysore. In all these five frontier states, Asoka is stated to have made arrangements for the medical treatment of men and animals. There is thus no doubt that the Aryans came into contact with the southernmost districts of India as early at least as the fourth century B. C. Is this story of the Aryan advance towards the south quite consistent with the new theory regarding the Dravidians establishing themselves in the Deccan about 500 B. C.? We feel that, in such a case, there must have been some trace of struggle between the Aryans and Dravidians in Indian literary works of the second half of the first millennium B. C. But curiously enough there is no such trace at all. On the other hand, it must be noted that the struggle between the Aryans and the Dasyus or Dasas, i. e. non-Aryans, is a remarkable feature of the oldest Indian literary work, viz., the Rigveda, which has to be attributed to a date earlier than the first millennium B. C.

The isolated existence of the Dravidian-speaking Malers in the Rajmahal hills on the eastern fringe of Bihar seems to suggest that the Dravidians were not entirely absent from North India. Since the Oraons are neither civilized nor have anything to do with megalithic tombs, it is difficult to believe that all Dravidian-speaking tribes can be associated with the megalithic culture of the Deccan. It can hardly be proved that the Oraons are a non-Dravidian people who migrated to the Chotanagpur plateau from some distant parts of the Deccan after having lost their original language. Of course anything can be conjectured.

There seems to be some evidence regarding the movement of at least some Dravidian tribes from the north to the south. The present-day speakers of the Dravidian Telugu language call themselves Andhra. The Andhras are mentioned along with the Pundras, Sabaras, Pulindas and Mutibas as being Dasyus or non-Aryans who became outcastes owing to the refusal of their progenitor, one of the fifty elder sons of Visvamitra, to accept the latter's adoption of Sunahsepa, not

only in the pre-Buddhistic *Aitareya Brahmana* (VII, 18) but also in the *Sankhayana Sruta Sutra* (XV, 26). They are stated to have been then occupying a land on the borders of the Aryan-occupied area of North India. This apparently indicates their occupation of a region abutting on the Vindhya. The Andhra people gradually moved towards the south and about the beginning of the fourth century A.D., their name came to be associated with the heart of the present-day Andhra or Telugu-speaking country, round about the mouths of the Krishna and the Godavari.<sup>8</sup> The *Apastamba Dharma Sutra*, a work of about the third century B.C., is known to be the product of a Vedic school belonging to the land of the Andhras, while the *Khadira Grihya Sutra* of the same age also belongs to South India.<sup>9</sup> This seems to refer to Aryan settlements in the land of the Dravidians; and some sort of fusion of Aryan and Dravidian cultures even at that early age is further suggested not only by the pre-Christian epigraphs the aryanized Satavahana rulers of the Andhra race, but also by the *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* (I, i, 25-31) of the middle of the first millennium B.C. This work speaks of three cultural belts in India from the Aryan point of view. The first of these was pure, i.e. dominated by Aryan culture. The second was *sankirna-yoni*, i.e. influenced by both Aryan and non-Aryan civilizations, while the third was totally impure, i.e. mostly non-Aryan.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that the Dakshinatyas (a name also known to Panini, IV, 2, 98) are placed in the second of the three categories. These Dakshinatyas must have been either aryanized Dravidians or Aryan settlers in the land of the Dravidians. More interesting from our point of view is however the fact that the *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* approves of the Dravidian cross-cousin marriage for the Dakshinatyas. Is it reasonable to hold that such peaceful adoption of a Dravidian social institution, which was totally opposed to Aryan ideas, could have taken place at such an early date if the Dravidians began to move towards the north only about 500 B.C.?

Moreover, we have still earlier evidence in favour of such a fusion of Aryan and Dravidian cultures. The cerebral consonants are believed by linguists to have

been borrowed by the Aryans from Dravidian speech as early as the Rigvedic age, while Aryan adoption of certain Dravidian words can be traced in works of later Vedic literature, most of which are pre-Buddhistic. The word *matchi* (Kannada *midiche*) occurs in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (I, 10, 1) while the names of the mother-goddess *Uma* or *Ambika* from Dravidian *Amma* 'the Mother', have been found in the *Kena Upanishad* (III, 12), *Maitrayani Samhita* (I, 10, 20) and *Taittiriya Brahmana* (I, 6, 10); cf. *Vajasaneyi Samhita* (XXIII, 18), *Satapatha Brahmana* (XIII, 2, 8, 3).<sup>11</sup> Similar other borrowings by the Aryans of Dravidian deities are believed by scholars to be *Siva*, *Kumara*, *Hanumat* (earlier *Vrishka-kapi*; from Tamil *anmanti*, 'the male monkey'), etc. That some of these deities were popular even in early times far away from South India is indicated by the fact that the goddess *Omno* (i. e. *Uma*=*Amma*) and the god *Komaro* (*Kumara*) are mentioned on some coins of the Kushana King *Huvishka* (106-38 A. D.), who had nothing to do with South India. I have also recently examined an inscription referring to the construction of a shrine for the god *Kumara* in the Hazara District of West Pakistan some time in the fourth century A. D. Linguists believe that *puja* (worship of deities by offering flowers), opposed to the sacrifice preferred by early Indo-Aryans, was essentially a Dravidian religious institution later adopted by the Aryans, the word being derived from the Dravidian word *pu*, 'flower'.<sup>12</sup> An early reference to the worship of gods with flowers is found in the *Bhagavadgita* (IX, 16), a pre-Christian work associated with an ancient religious leader of the Mathura region of North India, who may have had non-Aryan blood in his veins.

On the basis of certain typical Dravidian words, linguists say that Dravidians 'had alphabetical characters (*ezuttu*) written (*varai*) with a style (*iraku*) on palmyra leaves (*olai*) and a bundle of leaves was called a book (*etu*)'.<sup>13</sup> As the earliest use of alphabet in South India and Ceylon is that of Brahmi, these distinctive words would suggest that the Dravidians considered it their own and that they did not borrow it from the Aryans. There is again no

evidence to show that the Indo-Aryans had any alphabet of their own or that they invented the Brahmi script. These facts may suggest that it was the Dravidians who originally used the undeciphered Indus valley script from which Brahmi seems to have ultimately developed. At least this seems more likely than the theory set forth at the beginning of this paper in view, as noticed by scholars, of the survival of Dravidian vocabularies in the place names of North India, the possible interpretation of the references to non-Aryan peoples in Vedic literature, the presence of a strong Dravidian element in Aryan language from the Vedic age downwards, the gradual dravidization of the spirit of the Aryan language leading to a very large approximation of the neo-Indo-Aryan languages to the speech-habits of the Dravidian, the Dravidian character of a good deal of the extra Indo-European elements in Hindu religious ritual, thought, mythology and legendary history, and toponomy and cultural survivals pointing to the extension of Dravidian speakers in various parts of North India.<sup>14</sup> The Rigveda does not show that Indo-Aryans were conscious of entering a new country on their advent into India. This curious feature may be explained by the existence of Daha-Dahyus (the Vedic *Dasa-Dasyus*) in Iran. It has been suggested that the Aryans and the Dasa-Dasyu peoples came into contact in Iran (possibly East Iran) and that the racial and cultural fusion, including linguistic influencing, between them commenced outside India.<sup>15</sup> The suggestion that the highly civilized pre-Aryan people of Mohenjodaro and Harappa were Dravidian-speakers accords best, in the present state of our knowledge, with the subsequent trend of Indian history and civilization.

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1. See *Ancient India*, No. 4, pp. 180 ff. (especially p. 202); *Indo-Asian Culture*, January 1954, pp. 238-47; etc.
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3. Cf. *Successors of the Satavahanas*, pp. 215 ff.
4. See Raychaudhuri, *Pol. Hist. Anc. Ind.*, 1938, pp. 73-74.
5. Malalasekhara, *Sutta Nipata*, 977 (S. B. E., Vol. X, Part II, p. 184).
6. R. G. Bhandarkar's *Anc. Hist. Dec.*, Poona ed., p. 13.
7. Raychaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 271-72.

8. *The Age of Imperial Unity*, ed. R. C. Majumdar, pp. 191 ff.
9. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 227, 229; *S. B. E.*, Vol. II pp. xxxii-xli. Apastamba speaks pointedly "of the 'northerners' (II, 7, 17, 17) and follows what he calls the Andhra text of the *Taitiriya Aranyka* (*S. B. E.*, op. cit., p. xxxvi).
10. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, ed. R. C. Majumdar, pp. 7-8, 35.
11. Kieth, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads*, pp. 149, 199-200; Raychaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 57-58. The word *amba* of the same derivation and sense occurs in the *Rigveda* (Macdonell, *Vedic Grammar*, p. 7-8, n. 6).
12. See *The Vedic Age*, ed. R. C. Majumdar, pp. 154 ff.
13. *The Vedic Age*, p. 159.
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## EDUCATION IN TRIBAL BIHAR

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TO-DAY the Adim Jati Seva Mandal has become the most important agency for the spread of education among the Adivasis of Chotanagpur and the total number of schools under this organization comes up to about 300. The following table<sup>1</sup> gives an idea about the various grades of schools run by the Mandal :

### DISTRICTS OF CHOTANAGPUR

Type of School	Ranchi	Hazaribagh	Singhbhum	Palamu	Manbhum	Total
Upper Primary	154	52	17	34	12	269
Middle	12	3	—	1	1	17
High	4	2	1	—	—	7
Total	170	57	18	35	13	293

It is however very difficult to attract tribal children to school, especially because the schools are organized without taking the cultural and economic condition of the community concerned into consideration. The plans for tribal education which are under implementation can, in no way, be distinguished from those of non-tribal areas. In the following paragraphs I shall try to suggest those problems one by one that need consideration for the scientific planning of tribal education.

### *Introduction*

Education in the proper sense of the term is literacy plus discipline plus a kind of appreciation of the true value of society. Among the tribes of Bihar, our field experiences confirm that educated youth in general look down upon their own norms and values, their own economic system and tribal

<sup>1</sup> Annual Report of the Adim Jati Seva Mandal, Ranchi, 1953-54.

polity, and laugh at their own customs, practices and usages. So, although the tribals learn the three R's, yet they are uprooted from their socio-cultural milieu and conditions are rapidly formed for cultural disintegration or maladjustment. Certainly every change is bound to cause some hardship. But it should be our purpose to bring about the change as smoothly, and with as little loss of what is truly precious in tribal life as possible. For this purpose, planners should examine the characteristics of the traditional educational system prevalent among tribes and try to absorb some of their useful traits. The system of education of the preliterate peoples has its own interesting features. In childhood education is imparted largely by parents and elders. From adolescence, formal organized bodies take up the task. For example, we may mention the Morang of the Naga, Mohsuf of the Abor, The Nokpante of the Garo, the Terang of the Mikir, the Zawlruk of the Lushai, the Dhumkuria of the Oraon, the Gitiora of the Munda and the Birhor, and the Ghotul of the Muria and other Gond tribes.

On the basis of personal field investigation, it can be said that the traditional school is still alive in an elaborate form among the Oraons of Chotanagpur. After an elaborate ritual, once every third year, in the month of *Magh*, boys are admitted into the Dhumkuria. Once admitted, they have to pass through three grades, namely, novice, moderately experienced and senior. Each of the first two grades spreads over three years, and boys continue to live in the Dhumkuria in the third grade till marriage. Training is given to the beginners and also to boys of the second grade by the more experienced members of the superior grade. The Dhumkuria works under the supervision and control of the Mahto, who is assisted by the Kotwar. There is a separate dormitory known as Pel-Erpa for Oraon maidens, which though organized on the model of the bachelors' dormitory is not housed in a public building.

The dormitory is the central institute of the village. The Dhumkuria boys act as a corporate body in socio-economic undertakings of a communal nature and also play an important part in cementing village alliances of friendship.

Any plan of tribal education should try to utilize such cultural ingredients. It is very reassuring to note that a tribal educationist, Sri Julius Tiga, is making an effort to modify the institution of the Dhumkuria in such a way that it can be used for imparting literacy to the youth of Oraon villages. He and his wife are also trying to impart instruction in history and geography through songs and tribal terminology in primary and secondary grades in a Dhumkuria situated in Kanke at Ranchi.

### *Economy versus Education*

The tribal people have to struggle hard for their existence, and children are also not spared from this struggle. In some of the villages of Khunti sub-division in Ranchi, we found that about 56% of the school-going children did not take their admission, while the rest were admitted, but only 20% of the total school-going children continued their studies for some time. How economic conditions in tribal areas affect the education of children can also be gathered from a comparison of the figures of students in various kinds of schools in Ranchi district in the year 1951-52 with those of 1952-53. In the years under consideration, the strength of pupils in Primary Schools came down from 67,099 to 61,418, in Middle Schools from 14,426 to 12,667 and in High Schools from 9,674 to 7,586 ; although the actual number of schools increased in the same period from 1433 to 1445, 66 to 71 and 20 to 21 respectively. This alarming decrease in the strength of students in various grades may be due to several reasons, but the main reason is suggested to be change in session of schools from January to July. In January, after harvesting season, the economic condition of the tribal villagers is improved and they can easily think of sparing their children for admission to school. But July is period of scarcity as well as of heavy agricultural engagements. The tribal peasants and landless labourers do not find it possible to spare their children for school for they are needed in the fields.

A school need not therefore give training in the three R's alone, but it should be organized in such a way that, side by

side, the children get training in agriculture, craft, other vocations so that they can earn even while learning in school. For this purpose, the system of basic education appears to be well suited ; but the main disadvantage of this system is that the various parts of its syllabus are not yet integrally related to the central handicrafts chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.

If the syllabus is modified in the light of the cultural needs of the people, it will be more useful for simpler tribal societies. The question of providing food, clothing and other amenities to the poor tribal students will not arise in such an acute form, because they will be able to earn something by means of manual labour.

### *Education and Seasonal Activities*

The life and culture of the tribal people are closely associated with their seasonal occupations. After harvesting, i. e. during winter, they are well off, enjoy feasts and festivals and are in a mood to spare their children for schooling. But during the rainy season, that is, at the beginning of sowing, they have to do odd jobs to get even one meal for the whole day. During this period they are not in a position to send their children to school. It is hoped that the Government of Bihar will make necessary adjustment in timing of primary and secondary schools to suit the agricultural pursuits of the tribal population.

### *Medium of Instruction and Training of Teachers*

Children can learn far better through the language spoken at home than through a foreign language. One therefore notes with grave concern that from the very elementary classes, tribal children, not only in Bihar but in several other tribal areas of India, are taught in Hindi and their mother tongues are neglected. Our suggestion is that children should be taught through the medium of the mother-tongue at least upto the primary standard and the regional language may figure as a medium of instruction afterwards. Arrangements should also be made for the training of non-tribal youths and adults,

who have some working knowledge of tribal languages, so that they can be appointed as teachers.

The writer has interviewed several non-tribal teachers who have been working in tribal areas of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas and has learnt with sorrow how little they are informed about the customs and practices of the children whom they teach. They maintain a social distance and look down upon tribal traditions and values, and consider the tribal children to be dull and unintelligent. If they undergo a short training in social anthropology and racial psychology, such prejudices are likely to disappear.

### *Question of Script*

As regards the script in Bihar, there is not much difficulty. Almost all the tribes of Bihar have no script of their own. Only recently, at the Conference of Scheduled Tribes held in Lohardaga (1953), a Santali writer spoke about the existence of a Santali script, but it does not seem to have come into general use. Roman script was prevalent in some tribal sectors of Bihar under the influence of missionaries, but since Devanagari is not only the script of the regional language of Bihar but also of the national language of India, the Roman script has been now given up altogether, and Devanagari has been accepted as the script of all tribal languages in Bihar.

### *Syllabus, Text Books and Methods of Teaching*

We have suggested above that the school should not only teach the three R's but should also serve as a community centre. Education should be centred round the basic craft of the particular tribe. The actual teaching should be imparted not only through demonstration but through activity. Dances and songs should also figure prominently in the syllabus, not only as a means of recreation, but for training in the communal traditions as well as for social education. Shri Julius Tiga of the Dhumkuria School, Kanke (Ranchi), has made an attempt in this direction and has succeeded to some extent in imparting education with the help of songs, riddles, folktales and dances.

As regards the contents of the text books, they should be in conformity with the needs of the tribal society. The books that are recommended by the Education Department, deal more with the culture contents of the more advanced group. Some of the books written by Christian missionaries are also used in some of the schools. These books partly deal with tribal culture, but present a distorted view not only of the neighbouring cultures but also of tribal life. New text books should therefore especially be written for them. They should incorporate the relevant details of tribal mythology, traditions, heroes, their games and other means of recreation. Reference to parallel traits of culture, and later, to somewhat different traits needed for acculturation, should gradually come in the text books of higher grades. In short, upto the primary stage, the text books for tribal schools should be different from those of the general schools in the same area. In the middle stage, there should be one or two text books exclusively dealing with tribal cultural traits and institutions.

### *Conclusion*

It would be apparent from what has been said above that the planning and execution of education for tribal areas should be considered on a different footing from the rest.

In planning for tribal education, the mode and technique of traditional education of different tribes, and their other cultural characteristics should be considered and incorporated as far as practicable.

In any tribal rehabilitation scheme, the importance of literacy need not be overemphasized at the cost of economic welfare, as both are closely interrelated.

Education of tribal children should centre round the basic craft, this being generally the principal economic pursuit of the group, and stress should be laid on learning through activity.

At least upto the lower primary standard, the medium of instruction should be the tribal language.

Measures should be taken to train non-tribal youths and adults in tribal language by establishing separate schools for

this purpose. Preferably such persons should be selected as have some working knowledge of such language.

Teachers working in schools of tribal areas should undergo a short training in social anthropology and tribal culture.

The script for all the tribal languages of Bihar should be Devanagari and books should be printed in this script.

There should be a separate set of text books for primary classes dealing with the achievements, cultural traits, and heroes of that particular tribe. Such books should be prepared for each tribe by a Cultural Board specially constituted for each particular area.

The method of teaching should be as far as practicable familiar to the tribal children. They should learn through activities, stories and songs.

## BIRTH AND PREGNANCY RITES AMONG THE ORAONS

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**I**N this paper we have described the birth and pregnancy rites of the Oraons. The facts are based upon case-histories collected during our field-work, in the month of January 1953, among the Oraons of Chaha village, under Police Station Guimla in the district of Ranchi, Bihar State. In conclusion we have compared the facts collected by us with those of the late S. C. Roy as given in his book, *Oraon Religion and Customs* written about 25 years ago and have pointed out the significant differences. The facts have been described under seven main headings.

### *Determination of Pregnancy*

All our informants were aware of the fact that sexual union is necessary before a woman becomes pregnant and in due time gives birth to a child. But they believe that there must also be the blessings of God, otherwise sexual union alone cannot make a woman pregnant.

The stoppage of the monthly course is taken as the first sign of pregnancy, which is followed by other outwardly changes which an expectant mother gradually develops with the advancement of pregnancy. When Dukhia came to know that his wife's monthly course had not come in the last two months, he became sure that his wife had become pregnant. The counting of months is done by observing the different phases of the moon.

### *Rites in connection with the First Pregnancy*

No particular ceremony is performed in all cases of pregnancy among the Oraons. It is only when an Oraon wife conceives for the first time that a ceremony is performed to sever her connection with her paternal ancestor-spirits and

the deities of her father's village. This ceremony is a simple one and is known as *Juda karna* ('to make separate').

Tija of Kujar clan performed this ceremony when his wife Titri became pregnant for the first time, i. e. with regard to the birth of her first child Potho. The ceremony was performed on the 5th month of her pregnancy. On this occasion and on the appointed date (the date was fixed according to their convenience), Titri's father, Mangree, along with some elderly persons of his village came to the house of Tija. They were welcomed with the usual formality of washing their feet with water. After this they took their seat on a mat which had been spread in the courtyard. Then a pig was brought in the courtyard and Mangree threw some sun-dried rice over the head of the pig while he uttered the following words, 'From this day let my ancestor-spirits, gods of my village sever all connection with this pregnant girl (Titri). She now belongs to her husband'. The pig was then beheaded by means of an axe. After that a feast was arranged in which all of them took part. Rice and curry prepared from the meat of that pig were the main items of food. Thus the ceremony ended when Mangree with his co-villagers returned home. This ceremony is not performed during any subsequent pregnancy.

### *Observances during Pregnancy*

Observances during pregnancy can be divided into three main categories: (a) restriction on cohabitation, (b) restriction on food and (c) restriction on movements and work.

(a) *Restriction on cohabitation* : There is no hard and fast rule regarding cohabitation during the period of pregnancy, but in no case is cohabitation permissible after four months of pregnancy. According to our informant, if cohabitation is continued after four months of pregnancy the child in the womb is injured. Dukhia thinks that if cohabitation is continued after three months, the semen being converted into blood is deposited on the head of the foetus thereby causing a pressure on its head, which is harmful.

(b) *Restriction on food* : Pregnant Oraon women are not subjected to any particular food taboo, but they refrain from

eating meat or such other articles, and during the later stage of pregnancy they also do not take edible herbs which are generally taken after boiling. Such a selection of food is done for the welfare of the baby in the womb ; as they think that the meat will be hard for the baby to digest and it might catch cold if leafy vegetables are taken.

(c) *Restriction on movement and work* : Regarding restriction on work we found that usually, after the third month of pregnancy, a woman abstains from heavy domestic work. Birso in her case stopped going to the jungle to fetch fuel, or to the market with loads, or to bring water from the well. After the sixth month, she also stopped husking paddy with the husking lever. It is believed that as these jobs involve heavy physical strain, they would harm the foetus. Usually these domestic works are then attended to by other women of the family. If there is no one available, an elderly relative is invited for the purpose.

There are also some restrictions on the movement of the expectant mother. She is not allowed to go to the cremation ground which is tabooed to her. After dusk she is expected not to go to the agricultural uplands away from the village. In both cases, it is believed that if the taboos are not observed, some evil spirits which hover round these places do harm to the mother as well as the baby in the womb. During pregnancy, when her present youngest daughter was in the womb, Birso was not allowed to go to the cremation ground even when a death occurred in her husband's lineage.

There is no kind of restriction on the husband during the pregnancy of his wife. He can perform all his normal duties. He can sleep with his wife until the day of her parturition.

### *Sex determination*

About the sex determination of the unborn baby, only Dukhia narrated one method which he had applied in the case of his first child. And he had found that the method was correct. According to Dukhia, the person who wants to find out the sex of an unborn child should be a close relative of the expectant mother. He should go to the jungle and

search for a particular kind of plant (the name was not divulged). After securing the plant he should select a branch where there are nodule-like formations. Then that branch should be split into two halves longitudinally, and if there are black worms inside, then the baby would be a girl, while red worms indicate a male child.

### *The Birth and Connected Rites*

Under this heading we have described the following items : (a) the place of birth, (b) the method of delivery and the attendants, (c) disposal of the after-births, (d) treatment of the mother and the child.

(a) The birth of a child generally takes place in the house of the woman's husband. Either the cow-shed or one of the living rooms is used for this purpose.

(b) At the time of delivery, the woman is either made to kneel on the ground with the knees stretched outwards or she is made to lie down. She is generally assisted by elderly women and a midwife takes the delivery. The midwife is known as *Dhangrin* or *Kuchrain*. She is either an Oraon woman or a woman of a caste living among the Oraons. The Dhangrins learn the art only by experience. If the Dhangrin is not related to the parturient woman then she receives payment in cash and kind for her services. In no case are men allowed to be present at the time of delivery.

(c) After the delivery the midwife cuts the umbilical chord after tying it at the base by means of a thread. The placenta and the umbilical chord are put together and generally covered with *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) leaves. Later on it is buried by the midwife in a hole dug either in the courtyard or just outside the room where rain water falls from the roof. The hole can be dug by a male member of the house. When Birso's youngest daughter was born it was her husband, Dukhia, who dug the hole where Dukhia's mother, who acted as the midwife, buried the after-births.

(d) Just after birth, the child is bathed in tepid water and after wiping the water its body is massaged with mustard oil by the midwife. The massage is repeated regularly for

a number of days. So long as the mother's milk is not available, goat's milk is given to the new-born babe. After 3 or 4 days, when lactation starts, the baby is allowed to take the mother's breast.

After delivery the mother is cleaned by means of a piece of cloth. Then her body is also massaged with mustard oil either by the midwife or by some other elderly woman. This is continued for three or four days. On the day of parturition she is not given any solid food. Generally she is given a specially prepared soup of *kurthi* pulse. From the next day she is given rice, a curry prepared from sun-dried pulse-cakes and *urid* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*) lentils boiled in water. According to our informants, the specially prepared curry and *urid* lentils increase the flow of milk from the mother's breast. This diet is generally continued for six days, after which the usual diet is given to the mother.

### *The Period of Pollution and the Purificatory Rites*

Generally upto the 6th day after delivery, the mother is held to be ceremonially unclean. She remains confined to the delivery room with her baby. If anybody enters the room during that period, he or she has to take a purificatory bath. The period of pollution is also the same for the whole family. During that period no Oraon who is not a member of that family would take food in that house.

On the 6th day after delivery, the whole house is cleaned and besmeared with cow-dung mixed with water. The mother with an elderly woman of the family goes to a nearby tank or river and takes a bath after anointing the body with mustard oil and turmeric powder. She also washes her clothes. Then she returns home and the rest of the family take their bath as usual. They also clean their clothes. Thus the period of pollution ends, and the mother of the newborn child begins her normal activities.

### *Payment to Midwife*

Payment to the midwife is generally made after the period of pollution is over. When the midwife is related to the

parturient mother she does not get anything. Otherwise she gets remuneration both in kind and coin. Usually about two seers of rice and a few annas are paid to the midwife. When Somari, wife of Patay, gave birth to her son Lito, Bundhli acted as the midwife. She was not given anything in kind or cash, but at the name-giving ceremony of the son, she was given a hearty feast. During the birth of Mungri's daughter, Mako Lohar (a woman of the Lohar caste) acted as midwife. Besides one rupee, she got the following articles of food, one pot of rice-beer, 1 seer of rice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  seer of pulses, and some quantities of salt, oil, chilli and turmeric.

### *Comparison with Roy's observations*

By comparing our data with those of the late S. C. Roy, collected about quarter of a century ago, we find that, on the whole, birth and pregnancy rites have changed little. There are two important rites noted by Roy which we have not found in this area. The rites are known as *Paisari* and *Dandakatta*. The first one is formed by the presentation of chicken, rice and copper coins to the *Pahan* (the village-priest) 'either on the day of birth or within two or three days of it'; while the second is performed in order to protect the new-born child from evil spirits. We do not know whether they were formerly practised by the Oraons of this area or not. There is another significant fact that, on the whole, the payment to the midwife has increased in course of these years and some Oraon women have become professional midwives.'

## RABHA KINSHIP TERMS

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THE Rabhas are scattered throughout the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara and Darrang of Assam, but their concentration is found in the south of Goalpara. As regards the population of this plains tribe, it has been said that, 'The question of Rabha is difficult because owing to conversion to Hinduism the actual number of people who returned their tribe or caste as Rabhas has been steadily decreasing since 1911. In that year there were 79,000 Rabhas; in 1921 only 70,000 and in this (1931) census 69,000, yet the number of speakers of Rabha is practically the same now (27,000) as in 1911 (28,000), and considerably more than in 1921 (22,000) !'<sup>1</sup>

Scrappy references to the tribe are of course found in the monographs written by Rev. Endle,<sup>2</sup> Major Playfair<sup>3</sup>, etc. An attempt was made by me to investigate their kinship system in December 1954 at Habang Giri. Habang Giri is a village in Goalpara District, about three miles from Dudhnai, a motor station on the way to Goalpara town from Gauhati.

In order to understand clearly the basic 'setting' of the kinship terms, a brief reference regarding the social organization of the Rabhas is necessary. The tribe is divided into several sections, namely Rangdani, Pati, Mitoria, Totla, Dahuria, Bitlia, Shunga, etc. The first three are believed to enjoy a superior social status than the rest.

Each of those sections again consists of several clans termed *bar* or *barai*. Friend-Pereira<sup>4</sup> states, 'The septs or groups of families trace their descent back to a common ancestor'. Marriage within a *bar*, according to the informants, is absolutely prohibited. It was also learnt that two or more *bars* might unite to form a linkage called *hur* or *huri*. Each *hur* is also exogamous in character.

From the genealogies collected and also from the information supplied by our informants, it is found that descent is matrilineal, i. e. the child always becomes a member of the mother's *bar*. Marriage is however patrilocal, inheritance being patrilineal.

Regarding marriage, it may be mentioned that parallel cousins are not allowed to marry, but a person may marry his father's sister's daughter, or mother's brother's daughter. Moreover, a widow may at her will marry the deceased husband's younger brother only; but at present such union is not encouraged by the Rabhas. An individual may marry his wife's younger sister after the death of the first wife.

In this paper I have tried to present the kinship terms as collected in one particular field. The genealogical method was followed in course of the investigation.

Rabha kinship terminology shows the following characteristic features :

(i) Distinction is made with regard to seniority and juniority; this fact being evident in the use of terms for elder and younger brothers and sisters of the speaker. This distinction is further extended by the speaker to the father's brothers, their wives and their children and mother's sisters, their husbands and their children respectively. It is interesting to note that such distinction exists in regard to the father's sister's and mother's brother's daughters respectively; but not in the case of father's sister's sons and mother's brother's sons and mother's brothers and their wives, and father's sisters and their husbands.

(ii) Kinship terms are distinguished on the basis of sex of the person referred to, but not in every case. Some exceptions are found in the following typical cases :

(a) Sister's sons and daughters are referred to by a single term.

(b) Wife's elder brothers and husband's elder sisters are designated by the same term.

(c) A single term denotes daughter's sons, daughter's daughters, son's sons and son's daughters.

The sex of the speaker is also an important factor in determining the kinship terms for a person's brother's sons and daughters.

(iii) From the genealogy, it is revealed that the Rabhas use the same term in referring to two or more kins in the following cases :

(a) Wife's sisters and daughters ; husband's brother's sons and daughters.

(b) Wife's brother's daughters ; husband's sister's daughters ; brother's daughters (woman speaking).

(c) Wife's brother's sons ; brother's sons (woman speaking).

(d) Brother's sons and daughters (man speaking) ; sister's sons and daughters (woman speaking).

(iv) Reciprocal terms are also in use and such terms are utilized in denoting the following relationships :

(a) Father's elder or younger brother's wife (man speaking) and elder or younger brother's son (man speaking).

(b) Father's elder or younger brother's wife (woman speaking) and husband's elder or younger brother's daughter.

(c) Father's sister (woman speaking) ; brother's daughter (woman speaking).

(d) Wife's elder sister ; younger sister's husband (woman speaking).

In the following tables an exhaustive list of the kinship terms used by the Rabhas is presented. The abbreviations used are as follows : F—Father ; M—Mother ; B—Brother ; S—Sister ; Z—Son ; D—Daughter ; H—Husband ; W—Wife ; e—elder ; o—older ; y—younger ; m—man ; w—woman ; s—speaking.

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Terms</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Terms</i>
F.	Babra	y.B.Z.(w.s.)	Mama
Z.	Chabra mucha	e.B.Z.(w.s.)	Mama
D.	Chabra mecha	y.B.D.(w.s.)	Mani
M.	Jibra	e.B.D.(w.s.)	Mani
F.e.B.	Fajong	F.e.S.H.	Mama
F.y.B.	Bangbang	F.y.S.H.	Mama
y.B.Z.(m.s.)	Fajong	W.y.B.Z.	Mama
e.B.Z.(m.s.)	Bangbang	W.e.B.Z.	Mama
y.B.D.(m.s.)	Aichung	W.y.B.D.	Mani
e.B.D.(m.s.)	Amang	W.e.B.D.	Mani
F.e.B.W.	Aichung	M.B.e.B.	Mama
F.y.B.W.	Amang	M.y.B.	Mama
H.y.B.Z.	Fajong	y.S.Z.(m.s.)	Namshabra
H.e.B.Z.	Bangbang	e.S.Z.(m.s.)	Namshabra
H.y.B.D.	Aichung	y.S.D.(m.s.)	Namshabra
H.e.B.D.	Amang	e.S.D.(m.s.)	Namshabra
F.e.S.	Mani	M.e.B.W.	Mani
F.y.S.	Mani	M.y.B.W.	Mani
H.y.S.Z.	Bhaginbra	M.S.Z.(o)	Dada
H.e.S.Z.	Bhaginbra	M.S.Z.(y)	Fojongbra
H.y.S.D.	Mani	M.S.D.(o)	Buji
H.e.S.D.	Mani	M.S.D.(y)	Jhinbra
M.y.S.	Amang	W.	Michik
M.e.S.	Aichung	H.	Oomba
y.S.Z.(w.s.)	Fajong	W.e.B.	Anang
e.S.Z.(w.s.)	Bangbang	W.y.B.	Khuchibra
y.S.D.(w.s.)	Aichung	y.S.H.(m.s.)	Bainibra
e.S.D.(w.s.)	Amang	e.S.H.(m.s.)	Gimi
M.e.S.H.	Fajong	W.e.S.	Jhangbra
M.y.S.H.	Bangbang	W.y.S.	Nushibra
W.y.S.Z.	Fajong	y.S.H.(w.s.)	Jhangbra
W.e.S.Z.	Bangbang	e.S.H.(w.s.)	Gimi
W.y.S.D.	Aichung	W.e.B.W.	Bibi
W.e.S.D.	Amang	W.y.B.W.	Jhinbra
e.B.	Dada	W.e.S.H.	Dada
y.B.	Fojongbra	W.y.S.H.	Sadu
e.S.	Bibi	H.e.B.	Fobra
y.S.	Jhinbra	H.y.B.	Jhonong
F.B.Z.(o)	Dada	y.B.W.(m.s.)	Khobra
F.B.Z.(y)	Fojongbra	e.B.W.(m.s.)	Buribra
F.B.D.(o)	Bibi	H.e.S.	Buji
F.B.D.(y)	Jhinbra	H.y.S.	Anong
F.S.Z.(o)	Gimbhai	y.B.W.(w.s.)	Nunongbra
F.S.Z.(y)	Gimbhai	e.B.W.(w.s.)	Momo
F.S.D.(o)	Buji	H.e.B.W.	Buji
F.S.D.(y)	Nushibra	H.y.B.W.	Bibi
M.B.Z.(o)	Gimbhai	H.e.S.H.	Bibi
M.B.Z.(y)	Gimbhai	H.y.S.H.	Momo
M.B.D.(o)	Buji	F.E.	Jujhu
M.B.D.(y)	Nushibra	F.M.	Bidi
M.F.	Jujlu	Z.W.F.	Biai
M.M.	Bidi	Z.W.M.	Bianee
W.F.	Mama	D.H.F.	Biai
W.M.	Aiya	D.H.M.	Bianee
H.F.	Mama	Z.Z.	Subra
H.M.	Aiya	Z.D.	Subra
Z.W.	Buribra	D.Z.	Subra
D.H.	Jhanongbra	D.D.	Subra

<i>Man Speaking</i>		<i>Woman Speaking</i>	
<i>Groupings</i>	<i>Terms</i>	<i>Groupings</i>	<i>Terms</i>
1. (a) F.e.B ; y.B.Z ; M.e.S.H ; W.y.S.Z.	Fajong	1. (a) F.e.B. ; y.S.Z. ; H.y.B.Z. ; M.e.S.H.	Fajong
(b) F.e.B.W. ; y.B.D. ; M.e.S. ; W.y.S.D.	Aichung	(b) F.e.B.W. ; y.S.D. ; H.y.B.D. ; M.e.S.	Aichung
2. (a) F.y.B. ; e.B.Z. ; M.y.S.H. ; W.e.S.Z.	Bangbang	2. (a) F.y.B. ; e.S.Z. ; M.y.S.H. ; H.e.B.Z.	Bangbang
(b) F.y.B.W. ; e.B.D. ; M.y.S. ; W.e.S.D. ;	Amang	(b) F.y.B.W. ; e.S.D. ; M.y.S. ; H.e.B.D.	Amang
3. (a) F.e.S.H. ; F.y.S.H. ; W.y.B.Z. ; W.e.B.Z. ; M.e.B. ; M.y.B. ; W.F.	Mama	3. (a) F.e.S.H. ; F.y.S.H. ; y.B.Z. ; e.B.Z. ; M.e.B. ; M.y.B. ; H.F.	Mama
(b) F.e.S. ; F.y.S. ; W.y.B.D. ; W.e.B.D. ; M.e.B.W. ; M.y.B.W.	Mani	(b) F.e.S. ; F.y.S. ; y.B.D. ; e.B.D. ; M.e.B.W. ; M.y.B.W. ; H.y.S.D. ; H.e.S.D.	Mani
4. (a) e.B. ; F.B.Z.(o) ; M.S.Z.(o) ; W.e.S.H.	Dada	4. (a) e.B. ; F.B.Z.(o) ; M.S.Z.(o) ; H.e.S.H.	Dada
(b) e.S. ; F.B.D.(o) ; M.S.D.(o) ; W.e.B.W.	Bibi	(b) e.S. ; F.B.D.(o) ; M.S.D.(o) ; H.e.B.W.	Bibi
5. (a) y.B. ; F.B.Z.(y) ; M.S.Z.(y)	Fojongbra	5. (a) y.B. ; F.B.Z.(y) ; M.S.Z.(y).	Fojongbra
(b) y.S. ; F.B.D.(y) ; M.S.D.(y) ; W.y.B.W.	Jhinbra	(b) y.S. ; F.B.D.(y) ; M.S.D.(y).	Jhinbra
6. (a) F.S.Z.(o) ; F.S.Z.(y) ; M.B.Z.(o) ; M.B.Z.(y)	Gimbhai	6. (a) F.S.Z.(o) ; F.S.Z.(y) ; M.B.Z.(o) ; M.B.Z.(y).	Gimbhai
(b) F.S.D.(o) ; M.B.D.(o) ; e.B.W.	Buji	(b) F.S.D.(o) ; M.B.D.(o) ; e.B.W.	Buji
(c) F.S.D.(y) ; M.B.D.(y) ; W.y.S.	Nushibra	(c) F.S.D.(y) ; M.B.D.(y).	Nushibra
7. (a) F.F. ; M.F.	Jujhu	7. (a) F.F. ; M.F.	Jujhu
(b) F.M. ; M.M.	Bidi	(b) F.M. ; M.M.	Bidi
8. Z.Z. ; Z.D. ; D.Z. ; D.D.	Subra	8. Z.Z. ; Z.D. ; D.Z. ; D.D.	Subra
9. (a) Z.W.F. ; D.H.F.	Biai	9. (a) Z.W.F. ; D.H.F.	Biai
(b) Z.W.M. ; D.H.M.	Bianee	(b) Z.W.M. ; D.H.M.	Bianee
10. y.S.Z. ; e.S.Z. ; y.S.D. ; e.S.D.	Namshabra	10. y.B.W. ; H.y.B.W. ; H.y.S.H.	Momo
11. Z.W. ; y.B.W.	Buribra	11. H.y.S.Z. ; H.e.S.Z.	Bhaginbra

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DISTRIBUTION OF ABO, MN BLOOD GROUPS  
AND THE ABH SECRETOR AMONG  
THE TRIBES OF CENTRAL AND  
NORTHERN TRAVANCORE

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THE present material was collected from the month of December 1953 to March 1954 when a party of scientists from the Department of Anthropology, Govt. of India, visited the hill tribes of Central and Northern Travancore. As a member of this party, I had the opportunity of studying the Vethuvans, Ulladans, Mala Aryans, Muthuvans and Mannans.

The investigation was carried out in the different settlements as far as the time and itinerary permitted. Usually the parents of each hut in a settlement were selected for investigation.

The Vethuvans are found in the Tiruvalla and Pathanamthitta taluk on the north of Koni river and to the south of Pamba river. My Vethuvan data were collected from the villages of Katachera, Wannamkudi and Kadaminchera.

The Ulladans are distributed in the Rani Reserve of Central Travancore and in the taluks of Meenachel, Changanasseri, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta. I investigated the Ulladans of Paruva, Manadisala, Kakkuiuka, Eruvalikara, Thomarampara and Pulikunnur.

The Mala Aryans who live in close proximity to the Ulladans were surveyed from Irumbunikara and Pulikunnur village of the Rani Reserve.

The Muthuvans are found in the north-eastern part of Travancore. They are distributed in the Cardamon and Kannan Devan Hills, in the Anjanad valley, Mannan-Kandom, Anakulam and Pooyamkutty of Todupuzha taluk. The following

settlements were surveyed: Surenali, Kundali, Shenkolam, Nellepatti and Pottankadu.

The main settlements of the Mannans extend from the Cardamon Hills to the south of Panniyar river in the Pirmede and Devikulam taluks. They were grouped from the Attupara-kudi and Shenkolam villages only.

In all, I examined 591 persons for ABO blood groups and ABH secretor factor. Due to shortage of MN sera, only 167 persons could be tested for MN blood types.

The Anti-A and Anti-B sera were purchased from the Haffkine Institute, Bombay, and the Anti-M and Anti-N sera from the Lederle Laboratories, New York. The Anti-H used for secretion tests was prepared in our laboratory.

The bloods were taken from the finger tips into citrated saline so as to form a 2% cell suspension. The samples were collected in the morning and were taken to the camp where the tests were carried out in the afternoon within 12 hours of their collection. The tests for ABO groups were carried out by the macroscopic slide method by keeping the slides in moist chambers. The final readings were noted after an hour.

For MN-typing the bloods were centrifuged and washed twice with normal saline. The technique outlined by Buchi (1953) was followed.

Saliva was collected from the same persons who donated blood. Collection of saliva and technique of secretion test are identical with those described by Buchi (1952).

Known bloods and saliva from the members of the party were included as controls in all determinations.

In calculating the frequencies of the genes A, B and O the improved formulae of Bernstein (Wiener 1943) were followed. For M and N we used the formulae gene  $M = M + \frac{1}{2} MN$  and gene  $N = N + \frac{1}{2} MN$ . (Boyd 1950).

### *Result and Discussion*

#### **ABO blood groups**

Table 1 (p. 61) clearly illustrates the considerable differences among the various tribes. The only common feature is the relatively high A frequency. With the exception of Vethuvans

and Muthuvans, the tribes possess also a respectable amount of O. B is always somewhat rarer than A.

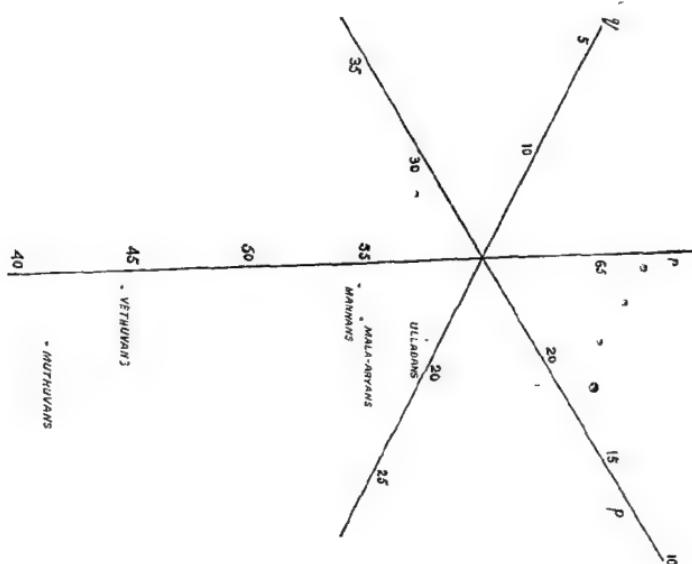


Fig. 1

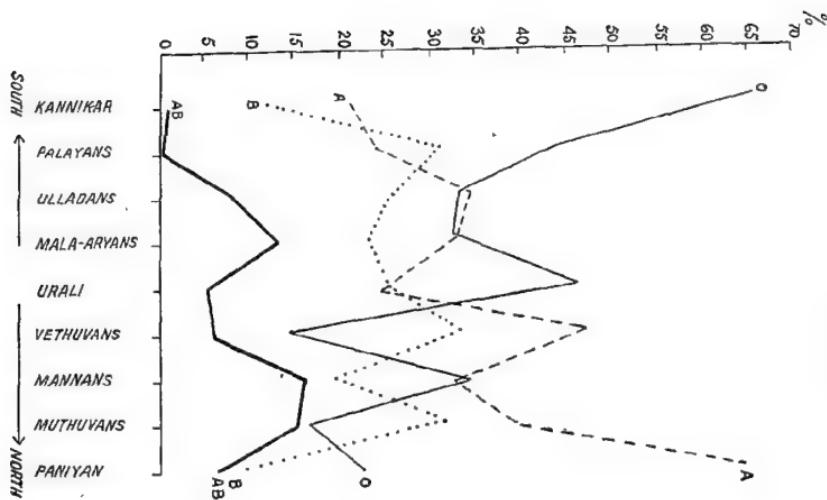


Fig. 2

Fig. 1 (above)

Fig. 2 (below)

The values of  $D/\sigma$  should not theoretically exceed 2.0 if a population is in genetic equilibrium (Birdsell & Boyd 1940). The value of  $D/\sigma$  of almost all the tribes studied are found

to be low. The only exception is formed by the Vethuvans (2.83) whose total number studied is very small. It might therefore be that chance fluctuations are responsible for this result. On the whole it appears that the tribes studied are in genetic equilibrium.

The most striking way to show the relation of the various tribes is to plot down the frequencies of the blood group genes in a system of triangular co-ordinates. (Wiener 1943).

Figure 1, drawn accordingly, clearly shows that the investigated groups assemble in a parallel to the r-co-ordinate. The differences thus might be explained by assuming that the original group was high in O as among Ulladans and that through addition of more or less equal quantities of A and B the pictures of the other groups resulted.

Considering the whole of Travancore, it is interesting to note (Table 2, Fig. 2) that the frequency of group O is relatively high in the south (Kanikkar, Buchi 1953) and gradually decreases towards central and north Travancore. Just the reverse can be observed with A. In the central region, group O and A show almost equal frequencies.

According to Eickstedt (1934) the most primitive racial stratum in South India is formed by the Veddids. He divides them into the more primitive Malids in the south and into the more progressive Gondids in the north of the sub-continent.

All the tribes which form the subject matter of this paper belong to the Malid group. A close study of this whole group (Table 2, Fig. 2) reveals that probably the oldest layer (similar to the tribes found in the south) possessed predominantly O, while northwards B, and clearly in an increasing amount A, was admixed with the older stratum. The tribes studied from Central and Northern Travancore are in concordance with the general trend of the frequency of the ABO blood groups of the Malids (Table 3).

TABLE I  
*ABO group and gene frequencies among the different groups studied*

Tribe	No.	Type frequency			Gene frequency			D/σ
		O	A	B	p	q	r	
Vethuvans	(64)	14.06 (9)	46.88 (30)	32.81 (21)	6.25 (4)	0.3296	0.4390	0.0318
Muthuvans	(140)	15.71 (22)	38.57 (54)	30.71 (43)	15.0 (21)	0.3221	0.4115	0.0244
Uliadans	(245)	32.65 (60)	33.47 (82)	25.71 (63)	8.15 (20)	0.2368	0.1874	0.0056
Aryans	(78)	32.05 (25)	32.05 (25)	23.08 (18)	12.8 (10)	0.2545	0.1917	0.5482
Mannans	(64)	34.38 (22)	31.25 (20)	18.75 (15)	15.6 (10)	0.2647	0.1854	0.5494

TABLE 2

## ABO blood groups of the Malidi

People.	No.	Group frequency.			Gene frequency.			Author.
		O	A	B	AB	P	Q	
<i>Malidi</i>								
Kanikkar	167	65.87	20.96	11.98	1.20	0.1178	0.0683	Buchi (1953)
Kanikkar	211	51.2	18.4	29.8	0.5	0.101	0.167	0.732
Kanikkar	151	39.74	35.10	22.52	2.65	0.213	0.137	Karunakaran (1939)
Playyan	280	44.3	24.3	31.1	0.3	0.134	0.175	Bose (1952)
Ulladhan	245	32.65	33.47	25.71	8.16	0.2368	0.1874	Iyer (1946)
Aryan	78	32.05	32.05	23.08	12.8	0.2545	0.1917	Present Study
Urali	107	45.79	24.30	25.23	4.67	0.161	0.166	Present Study
Vethuvan	64	14.06	46.88	32.81	6.25	0.3296	0.2293	Present Study
Mannan	64	34.38	31.25	18.75	15.6	0.2647	0.1854	Present Study
Muthuvan	140	15.71	38.57	30.71	15.0	0.3221	0.2661	Present Study
Muthuvan	69	19.1	42.7	31.5	6.7	0.298	0.220	Iyer (1946)
Paniyan	250	20.0	62.4	7.6	10.0	0.468	0.085	Aiyappan (1936)
Paniyan	61	19.7	62.3	13.1	4.9	0.434	0.096	Lehman and Cutbush (1952)

TABLE 3  
*MN type and gene frequencies*

Tribe No.	Type frequencies						Gene frequency			
	M		MN		N		D/σ			
	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	m	n		
Vethuvans	64	41	64.06	20	31.25	3	4.69	.7969	.2032	.2720
Ulladans	103	66	64.08	32	31.07	5	4.85	.7962	.2039	.4152

Vethuvans as well as Ulladans possess a strikingly high incidence of M. This however appears to be a common characteristic of all the Malids as Table 4 indicates.

TABLE 4  
*MN type and Gene Frequencies of the Malid group*

Tribe	Type frequency.				Gene frequency.		Authors
	No.	M	MN	N	m	n	
Kanikkar	152	64.47	29.61	5.92	0.7982	0.2072	Buchi (1953)
Paniyan	60				0.77	0.23	Lehman and Cutbush (1952)
Kurumba	15				0.73	0.27	do
Vethuvan	64	64.06	31.25	4.69	0.7969	0.2032	Present Study
Ulladan	103	64.08	31.07	4.85	0.7962	0.2039	do
Irula	86				0.72	0.28	Lehman and Cutbush (1952)

TABLE 5.

*Frequency of Secretor and Non-Secretor Factors of the Malid Group*

Tribe	Type frequency.			Gene frequency.		Authors.
	No.	Sec.	Non-Sec.	Sec.	Sec.	
Manikkar	167	47.90	52.10	0.2782	0.7281	Buchi (1953)
Malapantaram	116	41.38	58.62	0.2344	0.7656	Buchi (1953)
Ulladan	71	50.70	49.30	0.2979	0.7021	Buchi (1953)
Ulladan	245	48.16	51.84	0.2800	0.7200	Present Study
Mala Aryan	78	51.28	48.72	0.3020	0.6980	Present Study
Vethuvan	64	57.91	49.17	0.3505	0.6495	Present Study
Kuruvan	36	83.33	16.67	0.5917	0.4083	Buchi (1954)
Mannan	64	45.31	54.69	0.2605	0.7395	Present Study
Muthuvan	140	69.29	30.71	0.4458	0.5542	Present Study

The secretor frequency (Table 5) is astonishingly low among the majority of the tribes studied. The results agree with the findings of Buchi (1954). It is possible that we have here the centre of the non-secretor gene.

### Conclusion

The incidence of blood and ABH secretor factors of the tribes studied in the present paper agree fairly well with those of the previous workers. The study also reveals that there is a predominance of the group O, a strikingly high M and a relatively high Non-secretor incidence in the South. In the central region O decreases a little in favour of A. This process is intensified among the tribes residing in the North.

### Summary

592 Malids from Central and Northern Travancore were examined for ABO blood groups and Secretor factor. For MN blood types 167 persons could be tested.

Predominance of group O seems to be typical in South Travancore and is probably a characteristic of the older racial layers. Northwards A is gaining while O decreases.

Among all the tribes belonging to the Malid group the incidence of M is strikingly high, and relatively very frequent also is the non-secretor gene.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. B. S. Guha, Director, Department of Anthropology, Govt. of India,

for his kind permission to carry out this work among the different sections of the Travancore tribes. The author is grateful to Dr. E. C. Buchi, Superintending Anthropologist, for his kind guidance in writing this paper. To Mr. M. K. Nag, Statistician the author expresses his sincere thanks for his valuable help in calculating this data.

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## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

### Terracotta Net-sinkers from Hyderabad

In an earlier study (Sarkar, 1954) the possibility of stone and terracotta beads of the Indus Valley of having been used as net-sinkers was suggested. Reference was also made to the torpedo-shaped or long-barrel shaped sinkers being still used in Hyderabad. Through the courtesy of H. Krishna Rao, Botanist, Hyderabad Fishery Department, different types of terracotta net-sinkers along with two iron specimens were collected which have been described in the present paper. According to Sri Rao, these sinkers are meant for different types of gill-nets (Figure I).

It would be seen from the above figures that there are two main types of net sinkers, namely (i) barrel-shaped with tapering ends and (ii) marble shaped with a hole. The barrel-shaped sinkers vary from 9.2 cm. to 4.1 cm. in length, 1.9 cm. to 1.2 cm. in maximum diameter and 30.6 gm. to 5 gm. in weight. These variations in length and weight are dependent upon the type of net and the size and nature of the fish to be caught. This will be seen from Table I.

The similarity of these objects with some of the Indus Valley beads will be obvious from Fig. I where two specimens (Nos. SD 1399 and HR 1368) from Mohenjodaro have been shown for comparative purposes. Terracotta cylindrical beads have been found at Mohenjodaro (Pl. CXLV, 29.32 Marshall, 1931) and Chanhudaro (Pl. LXXXI, 12, 16, 25.30 Mackay, 1943) and they agree fairly in size; only the majority appear to be longer than those from Hyderabad. In Hyderabad, the maximum length is found to be 9.2 cm. (about 3.7") as compared with 4.1" from Chanhudaro (Pl. LXXXI, 27) whereas the smallest in terracotta is 2.0" at Chanhudaro as compared to 1.4" (about 3.5 cm.) from Hyderabad. Chanhudaro appears to have yielded the largest number of barrel-shaped terracotta beads and we have seen from our earlier study (Sarkar, 1953) that Chanhudaro was an important centre of fishing industry.

Haribishnu Sarkar

TABLE I

*Net-sinkers from Hyderabad (Presented to the Ethnographical Museum,  
University of Calcutta).*

*Type A—Barrel-shaped Terracotta.*

Sl. No.	Figure Reference	Length in centimetre	Maximum Diameter	Weight	Colour of the material	Types of nets in which they are used
1	A	9.2	1.9	30.6	Red	Gill net for catching Catla, Rohit, etc.
2	B	6.8	1.4	12.1	Black	Gill nets
3	C	6	1.3	8.8	do.	do.
4	D	5.3	1.4	9.7	Red	Gill nets for catching smaller fishes like Puntia etc.
5	E	5.4	1.4	8.1	Black	do.
6	Not show in Figure.	4.1	1.3	5	do.	Gill nets.
7	do.	5.4	1.2	7.5	do.	do.
8	do.	5.1	1.4	6.9	do.	do.
9	do.	7.7	1.9	22.9	Red	do.

*Barrel-Shaped, Iron*

1	H	9	1.4	35.06	Black	Gill nets for catching bigger fishes like Wallago etc.
2	I	3.5	1.1	9.06	do.	Cast nets.

*Type B. Marble-Shaped.*

1	F	—	3.5	35.06	Red	Gill nets for catching bottom fishes.
2	G	—	1.5	3	do.	Gill nets for catching smaller fishes.

## STONE NET-SINKER FROM PURI

Specimen No I. (Fig. 2).

Name of the specimen—Sinker  
 Shape —almost circular  
 Material —Khondalite  
 Length —8'3 cm.  
 Breadth —7'0 cm.  
 Thickness —5'0 cm.  
 Weight — $\frac{1}{2}$  seer = 1 lb,  
 Locality —Puri, Orissa

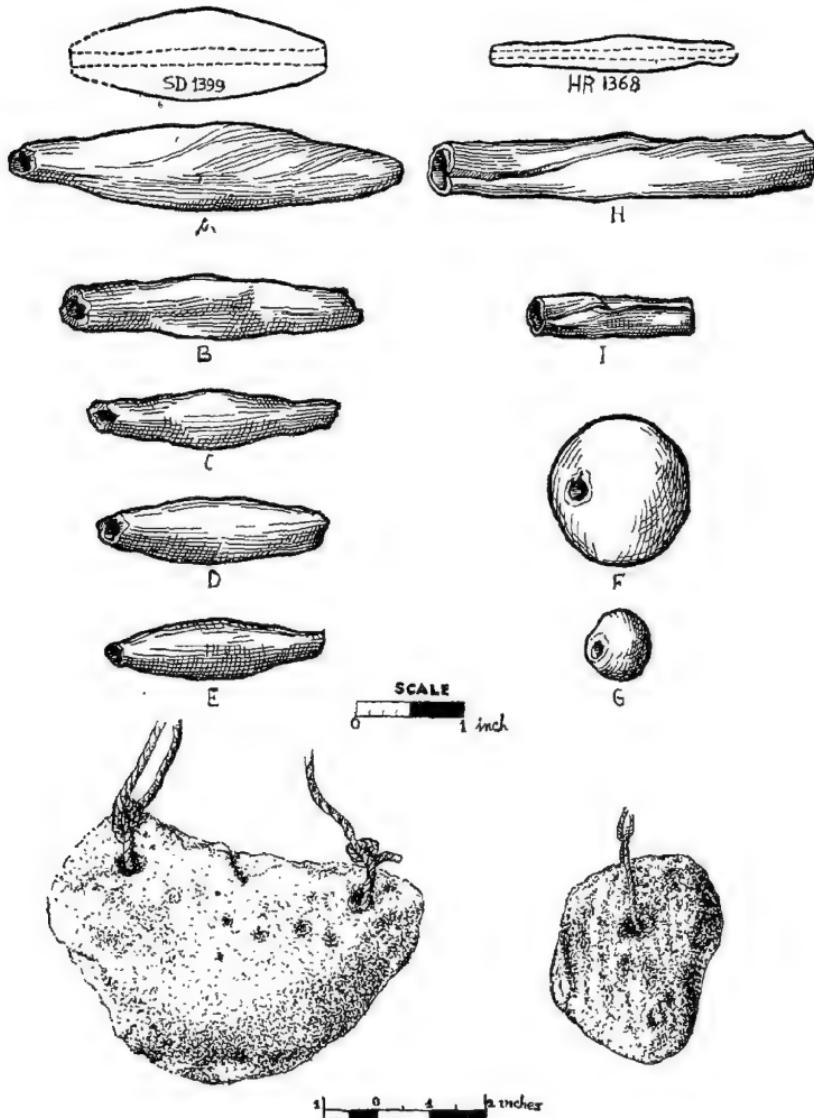


Fig. 1 (above)

Fig. 2 (below)

The specimen described above was actually used as a sinker in a net by the Nuliyas or Telugu-speaking fishermen of Puri.

This specimen has got a circular perforation in the middle, through which a string is passed. This string is interlocked with the conical end of the net. The net has light wooden floats at the upper margin and sinkers made of fire-baked clay at the lower margin. When the net is set in operation, the end where this sinker of stone is attached goes down and hangs towards the bottom. It is pulled at the other end, when the forms a cone end, and the fishes are entrapped in it.

Specimen No. II.

Name of the specimen—Sinker

Shape	—almost kidney-shaped.
Material	—Sandstone
Length	—18·0 cm.
Breadth at middle	—10·3 cm.
Thickness	—7·8 cm.
Weight	—3 seers or 1½ lbs.
Locality	—Puri.

This is another specimen brought from Puri and in use among the same people. There are two perforations at the two ends. These two ends are attached by a string to the big nets used by the Nuliyas in winter. Either these or small pieces of rock or brick are attached similarly. The floats are arranged like beads at the top. The floats are either made of cylindrical pieces of wood of small lengths or corks, and the net attached is allowed to dip into the sea. The length of the net goes upto a mile and it is almost like the seine net used by the fishermen of Bengal.

Tarun Chandra Bagchi

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### Social Sciences Association, Madras

A new association, called the Social Sciences Association was formed in Madras in December last. A large gathering was present including Prof. Alfred Salmony of New York University, and Dr Milton Singer of Chicago University.

Dr A. Aiyappan, Superintendent, Madras Government Museum, speaking on the occasion, referred to revolutionary social changes taking place in India now, 'which we, who are in the midst of these changes, are not able to perceive in the proper perspective. He said the social processes involved in these changes, new values replacing the old, the tensions created by change, the impact of democracy and planned economy on society, etc., were subjects of profound practical and also theoretical interest. Most of the work done now in the fields of social psychology, social anthropology, and sociology in India was by foreigners. Though science knew no national frontiers, it was still necessary that Indian students of the social sciences should make their own contribution to these disciplines. The time had, therefore, come for the organization of a group that would increase "our awareness of socio-logical problems."

The aims and objects of the Association are :

1. To undertake and promote studies and research in the basic social sciences, especially Sociology, Social and Cultural Anthropology, and Social Psychology;
2. To foster interest in the above subjects in educational institutions;
3. To propagate knowledge of, and interest in the social sciences by lectures, publications, etc.;
4. To provide a forum for persons interested in the social sciences, and for the exchange of ideas, and
5. To ensure the conservation of different cultures, and make them a living force in South India, besides helping in the amelioration of the conditions of backward peoples, and the advancement of their social, intellectual, moral, and physical welfare—if necessary, by representing their needs and grievances to the authorities concerned.

Sri G. N. Das, of the Deccan College Research Institute, spoke on Toda Poetry and Prayers, supported by tape recordings.

The Association elected Dr A. Aiyappan, President ; Dr U. R. Ehrenfels, Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, Vice-President ; Sri L. K. Bala Ratnam, Secretary ; and Sri M. S. Gopalkrishna, Treasurer. A Committee of 10 including Sri O. K. Murthi, Regional Commissioner for Scheduled Tribes and Castes (Central), Southern Region ; Sri P. T. Thomas, Principal, Madras School of Social Work ; Sri T. Prabhakar Rao, Director of Harijan Welfare, Andhra ; Sri G. E. Muthirulandi, Director of Harijan Welfare, Madras : and Sri C. J. Jayadev, Curator of the Government Museum, Madras.

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Dr. M. N. Srinivas of Baroda University, addressed members of the Association on 'Sociological Study of Indian Villages' towards the end of December.

L. K. Bala Ratnam  
Secretary.

## BOOK REVIEWS

- **The Aboriginal Races of India.** By S. S. Sarkar. Bookland Ltd. 1 Sankar Ghosh Lane, Calcutta 6, 1954. Rupees Twelve only. Pp. v + 151, 11 plates and some illustrations and tables.

The present book is of some considerable significance in the history of anthropological studies in India. An attempt has been made here, I believe, for the first time on a systematic scale, to apply the modern findings of Genetics to the study of the physical composition of the Indian people. Sarkar has subjected tribes like the Males of Rajmahal, the Andamanese, the Vedda and some of the South Indian hill-dwellers, like the Kadar, to systematic analysis. Others, like the Oraons, Santals, Khasis, have also been dealt with.

In the first part of the book, we are presented with reprints from the writings of Professor Eugen Fischer and Sir Arthur Keith, in which they have given their suggestions on the composition and evolution of the peoples of India. So long, it has been the general practice in India to depend upon single physical criteria for the identification of racial types. But modern genetic researches bear testimony to the fact that apparently similar single traits may result from the mutation of historically unrelated characters. Under these circumstances, the genetic behaviour of any of these physical characteristics has to be studied under conditions of transmission from one generation to another, and in cases where miscegenation is involved. Then only will it be possible to say with precision if apparently similar traits are really similar or not. Subjecting the 'woolly' and 'kinky' hair of some Indian tribes like the Kadar or Naga to this test, Sarkar expresses the opinion that the assumption of a Negrito strain in their composition is unjustified in the present state of our knowledge on the subject. He is in favour of more intensive genetic researches in this connection before any stable conclusion can be arrived at.

Identification between groups can be established only on the basis of *numerous* similarities; and tables of concordance

have been worked out between the Mundas of Chotanagpur and the Khasis of Assam. Similar studies have been made with reference to the Male, Santal, Ho and Munda. The result of such studies indicates the necessity of a considerable revision of the existing views regarding the racial history of India's aboriginal population. Sarkar has been, for instance, led to suggest the involvement of a Pareocean element in the composition of the Munda people.

The chapters on blood groups, finger prints etc. collect together much useful material. The detailed description of the cranial and limb bones of the Males, recovered from graves in Rajmahal, will also prove to be of great use in future comparative work.

On the whole, therefore, Sarkar's treatment of the subject ought to lead to a stimulation of further researches along genetic lines, on the physical composition of the Indian people. There is some evidence that the proof-reading has been done single-handed and in a hurry. A little more careful revision would have enhanced the quality of the book.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

**Caravan : The Story of the Middle East.** By Carlton S. Coon. London, Jonathan Cape, 1952. Pp. viii + 376, £1. 8s.

Prof. Coon has long been anthropologically interested in North Africa and Arabia—the marginal territories of the Middle East—and the present book is possibly the seventh work of his series on this region. His method has been to proceed from the margin to the centre—a centre, wherefrom we have got most of our cereals and vegetables, the domestic animals, the principle of the rotating shaft, now so widely used in factories and drawing our vehicles, the 360 degree circle, the 60 minute hour, the dome and lastly, the alphabet, spread by the Phoenicians. The latter came to the scene at about 1000 B. C., which according to Prof. Coon, marked the coincidence of a number of mutually related events. Besides the putative migration of the ancestors of the Phoenicians, they included the first recorded use of the domestic camel, the foundation

of the South Arabian kingdoms and the development of the overland trade routes from South Arabia to the Mediterranean through Hijaz. Coon is of opinion that the Brahuis were very likely the first to develop a camel culture in the desert.

The cultural frontier of the Middle East is from the Rif to the Pathan country and within this area, Prof. Coon has found an 'efficiently deployed' interlocking system, neatly bound in an equilibrium. According to him, 'the peoples of the Middle East are organized into a complicated social system based on an ethnic division of labor.' He has called it a *mosaic* system which is different from the caste system of India. Each group has its ethnic personality, this being linked to somatotype or body build. Prof. Coon is not an extremist either for heredity or for environment, but gives due weight to the influences of both. Deserts of Sahara (Plateau and Dune type) and of Afghanistan and Iran (Mountain and Bolson type) provide different environments and nutrition.

The majority of the peoples of the Middle East belong to one race. It is the Mediterranean, who 'occupy the centre of the state.' Prof. Coon has grouped within it, all the Arabs and the Oriental Jews, most of the inhabitants of Egypt, most of the Berbers, most of the Persians proper, majority of the Kurds, most of the Baluchis, majority of the Afghans and many of the Turks of Anatolia and Azerbaijan. Cradling of the very young infant and artificial moulding of the baby's skull and pinching the nose by fingers, have produced the Dinaric or Armenoid type of head, and Coon has found it among the Lebanese, Syrians, Druzes, Armenians, Assyrians, some Kurds, Gilakis, Turkomans and Kirghiz. Prof. Coon has also drawn attention to certain old ethnic strains in the refuge areas, which are probably the survivors of the earlier pre-agricultural peoples. The first of these is the Riffian tribesmen of Morocco, on whom Prof. Coon published his first work on this area in 1931. Secondly come the Lebanese and the Druzes of the mountains of Lebanon and Syria. They are physically different from the Arabs although they speak their language. Thirdly come the Kurds of the northern Zagros mountains and their northern extension in the Armenian

highlands. The Kurds are racially and culturally the eastern counterpart of the Riffians. The 'Assyrians' and the Armenians of this area are an ethnological problem. Coon has made reference to a perceptibly Mongoloid element among the Armenians. The present-day Assyrians do not speak Assyrian but a modern form of Syriac, a branch of Aramaic. They are darker in skin, hair and eye colour and have broad faces and snub noses. Coon attributes a southerly origin to these people.

The fourth refuge area is formed by the swamps at the mouth of the Helmand River. Here a group of people known as *Sayyad* (hunters), though mixed, show an old strain like the 'Murrayian' type of the Australian aborigine and the hairy Ainu of North Japan. Many of the Persians of Khorasan, many Afghans and Pathans are too big, too bony and too broad-faced to qualify as standard Mediterranean and Coon expresses the opinion that they are either an old mixture between the type of hunters and the Mediterranean, or an evolutionary stage in the progression from hunter to Mediterranean, or both. This strain is also prominent in the Brahui.

The Mongoloids entered the Middle East about the 10th century, and prior to that the Turkomans only skirted the area. Among the Turkomans the old Mongoloid strain is still evident, despite the generations of intermixture during the Ottoman Empire. The Mongoloid strain is pronounced in the Kirghiz, and in the outskirts of Gurgan there is a village of 'virtually pure Mongoloids'. The Berbaries, living between Herat and Mashadd, are also pure Mongols, said to be left-overs from the days of Jenghiz Khan. The Uzbegs of Turkestan proper are intermediate in Mongoloid intensity between the Turkomans and the Kirghiz.

Besides the above ethnic elements, the Indo-European strain has no less influence. There are seven ethnically distinct groups who speak their own distinctive Indo-European languages and dialects. They are the Persians (with the Kurds, the Gilakis and the Baluchis), the Pathans, the Kafirs, the Armenians, the Greeks, the Gypsies and the Sephardic Jews.

The Kafirs are a marginal people, inhabiting the Hindu Kush

mountains and Coon says, 'that they have never been properly measured'. I wonder, whether the author is aware of Dr. B. S. Guha's anthropometric measurements of the Kafirs taken by him in 1928-29 as a member of the party of the Zoological Survey of India. It is unfortunate that the majority of the tour reports of Dr. B. S. Guha has remained unpublished. Members of the Danish National Museum have just returned after a three years study of the Kaffirs. It is helpful that some of the photographs of the Kaffirs published in their report have been made available in the present work. Prof. Coon has probably missed the German expedition's work 'Deutsche im Hindukush' where the anthropometric measurements of the Kafirs and other contiguous tribes were taken by Herrlich, a student of Mollison of Munich.

The Gilakis are a forest people living on the southwestern shore of the Caspian Sea with colonies in the provinces of Gurgan and Mazandran. Their language, though closely related to Persian, has not been adequately studied and their distinctive material culture 'looks like an archaeologist's reconstruction of a western European scene during the Iron Age.'

These are some of the distinctive ethnic features of some of the peoples described by Prof. Coon in his *Caravan*. He has dwelt upon yet another important aspect. He has gone into the details of the social system which has preserved such a high level of skill for thousands of years with a minimum of equipment; the social system where the division of labour 'gave everyone a chance to specialize in one way and another.' The following facts emerge out of Prof Coon's analysis :

(a) how the concept of hundreds of peoples doing the same thing, organized into an autonomous guild is different from the western idea of a factory,

(b) how the governments of the Muslim nations have in the past, interfered so little with the private lives of their citizens, whose mutual relationships have been canalized into many kinds of institutions like the Sufi brotherhood, the Waqf foundation, the guild, the village council, etc.

These are problems for all, individuals and governments

alike. The book has been written with sympathetic understanding and respect, and the last nine chapters deserve to be read by all, specially those who aim at good administration and fair deal to all peoples. They will show, why 'a totalitarian in homogenized society is never free'; how also an understanding of culture-personalities can be of use in good administration and material welfare.

Prof. Coon has shown the usefulness of anthropology in a complex and strategic area and deserves congratulations for his study. One only wishes, there had been a few more maps of the local areas.

S. S. Sarkar

**Economic Development and Tribal Change.** Edited by Audrey I. Richards, Published for the East African Institute of Social Research by W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., Cambridge Pp. 301 including appendix, index, bibliography. Price 30s. net.

The present work is a study of immigrant labour in Buganda. Buganda is one of the most famous of the historic African kingdoms. It lies in the southern part of Uganda, along the northern shore of Lake Victoria and its fertile soil and ample rainfall make it one of the richest parts of Uganda. The population in the kingdom is very mixed and as many as 21 alien tribes are listed as residents therein. In some districts, the foreigners outnumber local inhabitants by a proportion of three to two. For the last few years immigrants in the neighbourhood of 100,000 per year have been coming into Buganda from different directions for purposes of employment in that cotton and coffee producing country.

The East African Institute of Social Research was requested by the Government of Uganda to go into the problem of immigration so that governmental policies could be framed in that light. The authors addressed themselves to the task of finding out the causes of immigration, the geographic and social features that draw in immigrants, the nature of employment available, the duration of their stay and the extent of their incorporation in the native Ganda society either as alien communities or as thoroughly assimilated groups. This study

is also important from the point of view of culture contact in which not only two cultures are face to face but numerous groups are involved hailing as they do from diverse linguistic and racial stocks, each acting and reacting on the life and culture of the rest.

The methods employed in this study are noteworthy. All documentary material, such as historical accounts dealing with the social and economic situation in Uganda, Lucy Dair's book on Buganda (*An African Tribe in the 20th Century*) Government reports, legal case records, birth and death registers etc. were ransacked. But the main body of the report is based on the study of a series of units called 'exploratory samples'. Certain communities or institutions were selected for first-hand observation before the beginning of an orthodox statistical survey. Most of the interviewing was done by experienced investigators living in the community. Material available from direct observation was supplemented by replies received to a questionnaire. Certain village studies in the area were also undertaken. Householders were interviewed in their own houses and a number of case histories has been included in the text of the book. The report claims to be only a modest foundation on which more intensive studies of anthropological type, e.g. observations on kinship or personality structure may be based.

Dr. Richards has done a service by bringing into print the fruits of the labours of four other investigators who have contributed chapters on the history of migration in Uganda, distribution of immigrant and Ganda population, Alur migrants and on the assimilation of immigrants into the body politic of Buganda.

Sachchidananda

**Social and Religious Life in the Grihya Sutras.** By V. M. Apte. Popular Book Depot, Bombay. 7. Reset edition 1953. Pp. 280. including index. Price Rs. 15/-.

Of the Grihya Sutras, Dr. Winteritz says, "They afford us a deep insight into the life of ancient Indians. They are, in truth, a real treasure for the Ethnologist."<sup>1</sup> They describe the life of

<sup>1</sup> *History of Indian Literature (English Translation)*, Vol. I, p. 274.

the ancient Indian father of the family only from the religious point of view, but as religion permeated the whole existence of ancient Indians, they are for the anthropologists most valuable material for the period. Even though this source does not give the actual state of affairs but the ideal, it reflects the ideas and aspirations of domestic life in those times. It represents, to Professor Firth, the 'social structure' of Hindu Society in ideal state, i. e. 'an ordered relation of parts to a whole'<sup>2</sup> is thought of.

Dr. Apte has presented in a limited compass a connected account of the evolution of social practices in ancient India from the age of the Rigveda to that of the Grihya Sutras as a prelude to the understanding of the social conditions in the latter age. He deals with the origin and evolution of the religious, social and political outlook of that age, the caste system, the position of women, the institution of marriage, family discipline, education, faith, superstitions, rituals, occupations, manners, morals, habits, food, drink, flora, fauna, agriculture, trade and commerce, arts and crafts, hygiene etc.

Caste system was the basis of society. The status, duties and rights of the various castes were defined and rituals were prescribed to emphasize and remind them. Although social mobility between the upper three classes was accepted in theory and practice and men of the highest caste could take a wife from a lower caste, alliances in the reverse direction were frowned upon. Symptoms of the rise of mixed castes could be seen in that age. Adult marriage had given place to pre-puberty marriage. The sexual act was regarded as a sacrament, and elaborate rules, rituals and sacred texts were recommended for recitation during courtship and consummation. It may sound sublime and ridiculous according to taste, but it shows the importance attached to the act of procreation and fits in well with the all-comprehensive conception of *Yajna*, a human counterpart of divine creation. The one function of marriage was the begetting of healthy children for the propagation of the race and the transmission of culture.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Firth : *Elements of Social Organization*.

Belief in magic seems to have been widespread. There was hardly anything except natural death which could not be averted or achieved with the help of magic. The infallibility of magic was due to the correct performance of the ritual and accurate chanting of the spells and incantations.

The work is altogether a significant contribution to the social history of ancient India.

Sachchidananda

**Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria.** *By Georges Contenau. English edition; Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., London. 1954. Pp. 342 including bibliography and index, 24 plates of illustrations and figures in text. Price 25s. net.*

The field covered by this book is one in which both the results of excavation and the translation of more tablets are continually expanding our knowledge. From its earliest beginnings in about 2900 B. C. until the invasion of Alexander the Great in 330 B. C., the civilization of Mesopotamia endured for some twenty-six centuries. Contenau has limited his work to the period between 700 and 530 B. C.; because he considers it to be truly representative of Mesopotamian life and also because most of the material we have, deals with this period. During this period, vast changes were taking place in the Near East. It witnessed the rise of the Second Babylonian Empire characterized by a renaissance of Babylonian culture under Nebuchadnezzar.

Imperishable original clay tablets form the most important source material. Political life of the period is covered by the royal annals, religious life is covered by rituals and hymns. Correspondence of officials, private individuals and merchants throw light on everyday life of the people. The official library at Nineveh assembled by King Ashurbanipal in the 7th century B. C. represents the learning of the age.

It is no wonder that in view of the invaluable abundance of source material, the author has been able to reconstruct a life-like picture of Mesopotamian civilization in that age. Material culture in its multifarious aspects; political life, i.e. the King and the State; the diverse petals of Mesopotamian

thought and details of religious beliefs and rituals, all unfold themsevelves before our eyes as we proceed from page to page in the book. More than 2,500 years ago Mesopotaminian life was as complex as our own even without the great strides that we have taken in the sphere of technology.

The value of the book is enhanced by the large number of illustrations and figures.

Sachchidananda

**Caste in a Peasant Society.** *By Melvin M. Tumin. Published by Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 1952 P.p. xiii+300, including biographical notes. Price \$ 5.00.*

Social stratification, caste hierarchy and class consciousness have been of much concern and interest for social scientists. In the volume under review, we find a fine example of 'a case study in the dynamics of caste'. The community in question is the pueblo of San Luis Ji Potepeque which is located at a distance of some 90 miles east of Guatemala city in Central America. Within this peasant farming society are 2,400 Indians and 1,100 Ladinos, the latter claiming to be of Spanish descent. The two groups live together in a self-sufficient community free from regular contact with the outside world. Their culture patterns are different, their roles in the community diverse, a caste system flourishes, and yet, as the author remarks, they must live and work together to maintain their common existence. The result is state of 'peaceful tension and equilibrium'; and this is the basic sociological problem of the society on which Mr. Tumin focusses his attention.

The book has been divided into three parts, each containing more than four chapters. In the first part an attempt has been made to describe the general round of life, in which participation of both groups is requisite to its continuity. The second part seeks to describe in detail the similarities and differences between the two groups, considered as social strata, hierachically organized with reference to each other. In this connection, the symbols of identification of social group membership, the round of activities in which each engages, both separately and together; the differential distribution of rewards which the

barriers of demarcation between the two strata are rigid and impermeable, have been very competently described. Finally the study focusses on some incipient and other well-developed sources of strain and tension which are present in the social structure.

From the general study of the book, it becomes abundantly clear that the distinction between Indian and Ladino is 'neither artificial, nor simply nominal' nor only caste like. Rather it describes a line of demarcation between 'two culture patterns and two world views' highly saturated with racial maladjustment, and not one of caste stratification. Almost all the chapters on 'tension and equilibrium' show the pattern of fourfold behaviour of aggression, avoidance, assimilation and acceptance that are in operation between these two groups of different origin. At one place the author himself remarks that 'no Indian can hope to be fully accepted in Ladino society, no matter how wealthy, well-dressed, literate well-educated or professionally employed he may be' (p. 215). In the concluding chapter (pp. 261-4) Tumin also records five brief biographies of Indians who, though secularized and skilled, could not receive acceptance within Ladino social circles of the San Luis Pueblo. Taken all in all, the present volume actually deals with the question of racial prejudice and not with the dynamics of caste as the title of the book suggests.

From the methodological point of view, the writer appears to be conscious of the fact that a wider basis of information and insight is required if one is to talk sensibly and reliably about tension and equilibrium in a human society. But inspite of his awareness, it is surprising to note that on the basis of answers of some 10 Ladino and 20 Indians interviewees, he makes generalizations on their attitude to the vital questions of intermarriage, group differences, inter-group relationship etc.

L. P. Vidyarthi

**Introduction to English Folklore.** By Violet Alford. G. Bell & Sons Ltd., London, 1952. P.p. 164. Price 12s. 6d. net.

The volume under review is an interesting book on English folklore and includes chapters on dances and dramas, on songs

and tales, on village seasonal life and its calendar, and on magic and folk beliefs. Besides this, the author also presents some theoretical discussion on the science of folk-lore in the opening chapter. He also expresses the opinion that folklore should not be considered as a study of survival because many aspects of folklore have a living content. He is quite aware of the changes and modifications which have the taking place in folklore, and values them as proof of its living nature.

The book is illustrated with interesting photographs.

J. P. Vidyarthi

**Illustrated History of English Literature** (Chaucer to Shakespeare). *Longmans, Green & Co., London. Pp. 232.*

Mr. A. C. Ward has breathed life into the dry bones of literary history. This is hardly surprising for Mr. Ward has successfully edited the history of English literature before. Formerly the best writers of histories of English literature were Frenchmen, Taine, Legouis and Cazannan are examples. Recently, there have been successful attempts (Oxford History for example) at writing history of English literature by Englishmen. Mr. Ward possesses all the qualities necessary for a successful historian. He has imagination as well as insight, precision as well as vision. There are many interesting digression in the book and Mr. Ward need not have been apologetic for indulging in them. The digressions have added richness and distinctiveness to the book. The chapter on Chaucer is the best. The illustrations are delightful.

Arun Mustafi

**The Wonder that was India** : A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-continent before the coming of the Muslim. *By A. L. Basham. Sidgwick and Jackson, London. Pp. xxi + 541. Price 45s. net.*

This is a survey of history of India beginning from the Harappa culture right up to the end of the Hindu period and ending before the Mohammedan invasion. It contains ten chapters with several appendices dealing with history, the then political life and thought, social conditions, religion, arts, language

and literature. The book is well written and contains over 200 illustrations in half-tone and colour together with line illustration and maps. The author has taken advantage of the result of the latest researches in the field and so the work has become authoritative.

The history of the earlier and middle ages, though a bit compressed, gives in a nutshell the whole thing admirably. The author has pointed out how Hindu India had connections with remote corners of South-East Asia and how Indian seamen used to brave the ocean to go to distant countries. He says that the whole of South-East Asia received most of its culture from India. The whole of the Far East is in India's debt for Buddhism. India gave the world at large the decimal system of numeral notation.

In dealing with the caste system he opines that caste is the development of thousands of years, from the association of many different racial and other groups in a single cultural system. He is definite that it did not develop out of the four Aryan varnas and that the two systems have never been thoroughly harmonized.

The chapter on religion, art, language and literature shows what pains the author has taken. His renderings from the Vedas, Upanisads, Sanskrit and Prakrit literature are very successful pieces of work. He rightly points out that the sages who meditated in the jungles of the Ganges valley 600 years or more before Christ are still a force in the world. He rightly states that capacity for toleration gave a characteristic resiliency to Hinduism and helped to assure its survival. His view on Indian art is bold. In his opinion the usual inspiration of Indian art is not so much a ceaseless quest for the Absolute as a delight in the world as the artist found it, a world of sensual vitality. This was so because it came from the hands of secular craftsman who, though working according to priestly instructions and increasingly rigid iconographical rules, loved the world they knew with great intensity.

The book is scholarly but at the same time pleasant

reading. There is a bibliography at the end for those who wish to pursue the subject further.

H. D. Ghosh

**India and Pakistan** (A General and Regional Geography). By *O. H. K. Spate, with a chapter on Ceylon by B. H. Farmer. Methuen & Co., Ltd., London : 1954. Pp. xxvii + 822, with maps and diagrams. Price 65s. net.*

This is an authoritative book and the great amount of labour taken by the author is discernible in every page. The book is not geography only, it also deals with the economic and sociological aspects of things.

As a rule the appraisal is fair and to the point. Thus at page 786, it has been succinctly pointed out that the prime needs of India and Pakistan are more fertility in their fields and less fertility in their homes. At page 230 it has been correctly stated that the essential improvement of cattle cannot be obtained without limitation and even actual reduction of numbers; but that sentiment and policy act in a contrary direction.

As regards reserve of coking coal in India it has been remarked that that the most meticulous conservation is necessary, that unfortunately methods are usually wasteful in the extreme, and that unless they are reformed the probable life of good coking coal in India can be measured in terms of a few decades.

Industrially Pakistan must virtually begin at the beginning. There are really no foundations on which to build heavy basic industries there. There is natural interdependance of India and Pakistan economically. To forget this is to defy the facts of economic geography and the laws of economic science. All these are very true observations. There are however certain observations made in the book with which one may not agree. Thus at page 320, the non-discrimination against British shipping regarding India's coastal trade is supported by a plausible argument that the coastal trade of Britain was open to any Indian vessel which could get there. It overlooks the age of Indian shipping *vis-a-vis* British

shipping. At age 550 an apprehension has been shown that East Pakistan might eventually be brought into the orbit of an Indian imperialism. Until now, even the bitterest critics of India have not observed any tendency on the latter's part which might be called imperialistic, in the sense in which the word has been used so long. The author has observed that economically there seems very little justification for the continued existence of West Bengal, and that Kashmir should belong to West Pakistan. We are afraid these conclusions are hasty and do not give the entire picture.

However inspite of these shortcomings we must say that Dr. Spate has produced an excellent text book.

H. D. Ghosh

**Report of the Second Conference for Tribes and Tribal (Scheduled) Areas, (held at Lohardaga, in Ranchi District Bihar), on the 11th, 12th & 13th November, 1953. Published by Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangha, Kingsway, Delhi. Pp. 291. Price Rs. 2.**

This volume contains a complete record of all the proceedings of the Conference, which was organized by the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Delhi. The book is divided into two parts. Part I gives the addresses delivered at the Conference and the discussion on the subjects and Part II contains the papers submitted or read at the Conference. The addressss and papers are in Hindi and English, as delivered. Some of the papers, like those on the shifting cultivation among different aboriginal tribes and problems connected with dietaries and nutrition of the tribal population, are particularly interesting. It is hoped that the book will be found useful by social workers, State governments, anthropologists and all others interested in tribal welfare. The price is also quite moderate.

P. K. Mitra

**Garhwal Painting, with introduction and notes. By W. G. Archer. Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1954. Price 12s. 6d.**

This fine album of Garhwal painting, a companion to the album of *Kangra Painting* by the same author, is a latest

addition to the Faber Gallery of Oriental Art. It contains 10 plates of Garhwal painting of great charm and elegance. Mr. Archer has written a very interesting introduction in which he has traced the history of the Garhwal school. He is of the opinion that both Kangra and Garhwal schools of painting were derived from a common source, viz. the Guler School (Guler was a State in the Punjab Hills.). Thus both had similar inspirations and ran on parallel lines. He holds the view that the best work of this school was only spread over a short period of about 30 years and probably came from the hand of a single master.

In the notes explaining the motifs and feelings of each picture, Mr. Archer has displayed wide and accurate knowledge of Hindu mythological classics, thus giving them exceptional interest. The plates are superb, thus making the book excellent presentation album for those who love art and painting.

P. K. Mitra